S M Schur

THE Public Interest

NUMBER 110, WINTER 1993, PRICE: $5.50

What Infrastructure Crisis?

Heywood T. Sanders

In Praise of Pork — *John W. Ellwood & Eric M. Patashnik*

Our Cultural Perplexities (IV): Shakespeare—"For All Time"? — *Paul A. Cantor*

Social Science and Minority "Set-Asides" — *George R. LaNoue*

Genetic Engineering: The Making of Monsters? — *Bernard D. Davis*

Pro & Con:

"For the Sake of the Children" — *Andrew J. Cherlin vs. Richard T. Gill*

WINTER BOOKS SUPPLEMENT

Reviews by *Mary R. Lefkowitz, Joseph Adelson, Eric Reis, Suzanne Garment, Roger Starr, Thomas L. Pangle, Joshua Abramowitz,* and *Irving Louis Horowitz*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE Public Interest

NUMBER 110, WINTER 1993

CONTENTS

What Infrastructure Crisis?	*Heywood T. Sanders*	3
In Praise of Pork	*John W. Ellwood & Eric M. Patashnik*	19
Our Cultural Perplexities (IV): Shakespeare—"For All Time"?	*Paul A. Cantor*	34
Social Science and Minority "Set-Asides"	*George R. LaNoue*	49
Genetic Engineering: The Making of Monsters?	*Bernard D. Davis*	63
Pro & Con: "For the Sake of the Children"	*Andrew J. Cherlin vs. Richard T. Gill*	77
Winter Books Supplement	*Contents*	92
Contributors		76

THE PUBLIC INTEREST (ISSN-0033-3557) is published quarterly by National Affairs, Inc., and appears in Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall issues. Its office of publication is located at 1112 16th Street, NW, Suite 530, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone: (202) 785-8555. Subscription price: $21 for one year, $38 for two years, $54 for three years. Add $3 annually for Canadian and foreign subscriptions. Unsolicited material cannot be returned unless accompanied by sufficient return postage. Second-class postage is paid at Washington, DC, and at additional mailing offices. ©1993 by National Affairs, Inc. Postmaster: Please send all changes of address to *The Public Interest* Subscription Office, Dept. PI, P.O. Box 3000, Denville, NJ 07834. Articles appearing in this journal are abstracted and indexed in *Reader's Guide, P.A.I.S., Historical Abstracts, ABC Pol Sci, Social Science Index, Sociological Abstracts, Academic Abstracts, Social Science Source,* and *America: History and Life,* and are available on microfilm from University Microfilms International. *The Public Interest* is printed by William Byrd Press.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Editors
Irving Kristol and Nathan Glazer

Publication Committee
Martin Feldstein
Harry Kahn
H. J. Kaplan
Charles Krauthammer
Glenn C. Loury
Harry McPherson
Daniel P. Moynihan
Charles Murray
Isabel V. Sawhill
Martin E. Segal
Arthur L. Singer, Jr.
Roger Starr
Irwin M. Stelzer
James Q. Wilson

Executive Editor
Ben Wildavsky

Managing Editor
Ira Carnahan

Assistant Editors
Joshua Abramowitz
Eric Reis

Assistant to the Editors
Karis Kercher

Editorial Office
1112 16th Street, NW, Suite 530
Washington, DC 20036

Subscription Office
The Public Interest, Department PI
P.O. Box 3000
Denville, NJ 07834

Newsstand Distributors
Bernhard DeBoer, Inc.
113 Centre Street
Nutley, NJ 07110

Ingram Periodicals, Inc.
1226 Heil Quaker Boulevard
La Vergne, TN 37086

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What infrastructure crisis?

HEYWOOD T. SANDERS

JUST A FEW years ago, the term "infrastructure" held little meaning for most people. Today citizens and policymakers alike increasingly subscribe to the notion that we suffer from an "infrastructure crisis," marked by deteriorating highways, bridges, and sewers. News stories regularly describe an infrastructure that is "rotting," "crumbling," or "collapsing." This conclusion is bolstered by historical and international comparisons of capital-investment spending, which ostensibly demonstrate a persistent national failure to invest in public works. Meanwhile, the recent recession has added urgency to calls for a massive effort to boost public capital spending, create new jobs, and restore our infrastructure to its previous glory. President-elect Clinton's plan for "Putting People First" calls for spending an additional $20 billion a year on everything from rebuilding highways to constructing high-speed rail lines. And the nation's mayors have identified more than $26 billion in immediate public works projects to help lead cities and the nation out of recession.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

But while visions of greater economic competitiveness and a new WPA hold increasing political appeal, this idea of a vast and pervasive national infrastructure crisis has been built on very few statistics and a number of myths. America's public works are not falling apart. To be sure, public works did suffer from a spending decline in the 1970s. And some localities (and an occasional state) appear to face real problems of physical decay and deterioration. However, the root causes of these problems, even in many of our worst-off cities, are largely political rather than fiscal or economic.

The myth of declining spending

According to many reports, we are simply not spending enough on public works, in part because infrastructure ranks low on the priority lists of politicians. This "underspending" is often stated relative to spending in other industrialized countries, or to the value of our gross domestic product. But appropriate comparisons must adjust for differences across nations in the size and content of the public sector, and for the role and function of different types of infrastructure as well. When we make these adjustments, the underspending myth becomes evident.

The basic categories of infrastructure are highways and streets, water systems and supply, and sewer systems and wastewater treatment. Spending on these categories is almost entirely an activity of state and local governments, although federal grant assistance accounts for a substantial share of state and local spending. In terms of capital spending, the first category—highways and streets—is by far the largest, amounting to almost $26 billion of state and local spending in 1991 (this figure and all others in this section are expressed in 1987 dollars). Highway capital spending dwarfs spending on sewers ($8.32 billion) and water ($5.75 billion), as well as mass transit ($1.70 billion), according to figures from the Department of Commerce.

The trends in capital spending for these categories of basic infrastructure are quite clear, and contradict arguments about public inattention and government failure. Highway spending boomed during the 1960s, as we built the Interstate Highway System with federal grant funds. Then spending slipped during the 1970s, as revenues from gasoline taxes—by then the principal source of highway spending—failed to keep up with infla-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion. But from a low point of about $17 billion in 1981, state and local highway investment increased regularly for nine straight years. The preliminary figure of $25.3 billion for 1991 represents a modest drop from the $26.7 billion of 1990. But the figures for 1990 and 1991 are just about equal to the annual average for the 1960s, the period of the great national investment in the Interstate Highway System, and spending will continue to increase over the next few years. Indeed, highway spending for the first half of 1992 proceeded at an annual rate of more than $29 billion. Even greater federal highway spending will be fueled by the new Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, and state spending will be buoyed by a host of increases in state gasoline taxes enacted over the last few years.

The spending trends for the other two categories, water and sewer systems, tell a similar story. State and local capital investment for sewer systems boomed during the early 1970s with a boost from federal grants under the Clean Water Act. The postwar spending peak came in 1975, with just over $9 billion in capital investment. Then spending dropped off as federal aid declined in the early 1980s. Yet in 1991, spending on sewers reached $8.32 billion, just under the postwar peak. As with highways, spending has notably increased since 1985, notwithstanding a decrease in federal aid.

Capital investment for water systems has also moved steadily upward over the last decade. Spending in 1991 came to $5.75 billion, the highest annual expenditure in the nation's history. Public investment for water supply and distribution in 1991 was more than twice the annual spending of the early 1970s, even after adjusting for inflation.

Beyond the three basic infrastructure categories, spending on mass transit is the one clear exception to the pattern of steady long-term increases in infrastructure investment. Mass-transit facility spending through the 1980s has fluctuated from year to year, averaging about $1.5 billion (still considerably higher than the annual average of $750 million during the 1960s). But in the last four years, even mass transit has shown regular increases, with 1991 spending totalling $1.7 billion. State and local capital spending on airports, moreover, has been on the increase since 1982. Spending in 1991 amounted to $2.54 billion, just under the nation's historical peak in 1990 ($2.64 billion) and a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

37-percent increase over spending in 1970. The amounts spent on both mass transit and airports are, of course, dwarfed by highway spending.

These spending trends belie the notion that we are underinvesting or living on the investments of past generations. Led by sharp increases in highway investment, spending has gone up in the last decade and shows every sign of continuing to rise. Total investment in streets, highways, mass transit, airports, and water and sewer systems came to $43.66 billion in 1991, a figure that is 41 percent above the 1982 low point in capital spending.

In two of the three basic infrastructure categories, spending has also kept pace with the growth rate in population. The 1991 ratio of capital investment for water systems to population size is just under the ratio for the peak postwar spending year of 1968. And for sewers and wastewater treatment, population-adjusted spending in 1991 exceeded the average annual spending of the 1970s, the historical high point for sewer-system investment. It is only for highways that capital spending lags on a per capita basis. There, state and local investment has yet to meet the peak levels of the mid-1960s, although it has been steadily increasing.

Some recent analyses of infrastructure spending have pointed to a spending decline relative to total federal spending or to the nation's gross domestic product. Using either of these measures, infrastructure spending, particularly on highways, has indeed declined from its peak years in the mid-1960s, although comparisons with overall federal spending are complicated by the enormous growth in Social Security and Medicare outlays. But past spending history should not necessarily dictate spending today or in the future. The spending boom of the 1960s reflected a national investment in the creation of the Interstate Highway System and new suburban development. Today it is far from clear that the nation should again spend the amount of money required to build more than 40,000 miles of new highways; repairing existing highways is a different—and far less expensive—undertaking.

Recent patterns of infrastructure investment suggest that public officials and voters are quite capable of recognizing the importance of maintaining streets and sewers, and of supporting new taxes and spending for them. Twenty-two states increased their

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gasoline tax rates between 1989 and 1991 to support highway investment. California, long bedeviled by taxation and spending issues, saw the public approve a referendum providing for regular annual gas tax increases to 1994. In fact, even without a vast national campaign to rebuild the infrastructure or to spur state and local government infrastructure investment, these governments are doing just that. And by raising gasoline tax rates and sewer fees, and promoting bond issues for airport expansion and development, state and local governments are providing new and larger revenue streams for future infrastructure-spending increases.

Not a federal case

The second infrastructure myth is that we face a pervasive, national problem that requires a solution at the federal level. The reality is quite different. Take the widely reported case of national bridge problems. As of mid-1990, according to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), there were almost 276,000 bridges on the federal-aid highway system, the backbone of our highway and street system. About 13 percent of those bridges were classified as "structurally deficient," meaning that they require reduced loads, restricted traffic, or immediate rehabilitation. These are the nation's real "problem bridges." Another 18 percent were deemed "functionally obsolete," a classification that includes those that do not meet current standards for lane width or for the curve of highway approach. These obsolete spans might warrant renewal or replacement, but they are not substantial safety or structural risks, so it seems appropriate to focus on the deficient-bridge category.

The 36,742 structurally deficient bridges do represent a real infrastructure need. But that need is not distributed evenly across the country. Fully 40 percent of the deficient federal-aid-system bridges are located in just six states. The worst four states account for more than 11,500 bridges, or 31.4 percent of the national total. For the great majority of states, bridge problems are fairly modest in scope.

Although the average incidence of structurally deficient bridges nationally is 13 percent, 24 percent of federal-aid bridges in Missouri are deficient, while West Virginia hits 34.5 percent. New York state leads the nation with fully 55.7 percent of its

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

almost 9,000 bridges deemed deficient. Clearly, bridge needs are very different across the states.

Individual states are responsible for most of their own bridge and highway maintenance, and some are doing a good job. Only 2 percent of Florida's bridges are deficient, and the figure for Oregon is 5.5 percent. Even in states with severe winter weather and problems caused by road salt—Minnesota (10.7 percent) and Maine (12 percent), for example—real structural problems are relatively modest. Yet other states, like New York and West Virginia, lag far behind national norms.

This uneven distribution is mirrored in other highway needs, such as pavement condition. According to 1989 data, the average percentage of "poor" quality roads across the states is 11 percent. In most states the problem is relatively small. For example, only 5 percent of highway pavement in Texas is in poor condition, and the proportion for Connecticut is only 3.6 percent. For other states, like Massachusetts (10.1 percent) or Michigan (10.8 percent) the needs approximate the national average. But a handful of states stand out with unusually poor roads. The "poor" percentage for Rhode Island is 26.8, while Idaho stands at 27.7 percent and Mississippi measures 22.9 percent. As with bridges, a small number of states look much worse than their counterparts, and these differences do not appear to correspond directly to varying weather conditions. A major federal spending program would obviously help a few poorly managed states, but only at the expense of others that have done a good job of maintaining their own bridges and highways.

Inexpensive repairs

A third great infrastructure myth is that it will cost huge sums of money to fix our "crumbling" infrastructure. Needs estimates during the 1980s from groups like the Associated General Contractors of America were often in the trillions of dollars, reflecting the cost of replacing thousands of bridges and a large portion of our street, highway, and sewer systems. These estimates tend to impress by their very scale, and may well have played a role in stimulating the increasing federal, state, and local capital investment of the last decade. Yet large cost estimates can conceal as much as they reveal, muddying safety prob-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lems with higher design standards, or including the "wish lists" of local officials along with vital needs.

Take the case of recent needs estimates for bridges and highways. The Federal Highway Administration's longstanding estimate of $51 billion to meet our national bridge needs has been widely reported in the media. But that figure covers a wide range of needs across all the states. Divided into some specific categories that reflect both governmental responsibility and immediacy, the $51 billion total looks a bit more tractable.

First, very little of this total involves structures on the Interstate Highway System, the most vital national transportation system with the greatest vehicle traffic. Interstate bridge needs come to only $3.5 billion—quite a manageable amount at a time when federal highway spending alone comes to more than $16 billion annually.

Indeed, the repair cost for structurally deficient bridges on the entire federal-aid highway system comes to only $19.1 billion. Recall that these deficient bridges represent the real "problem" category of potential safety difficulties. Another $12 billion of the total bridge-needs estimate is made up of "functionally obsolete" spans on the federal-aid system. These bridges may not meet contemporary standards, but they can often be improved (with better signs and markings, for example) at far less than the total cost of physical rehabilitation or repair. Finally, about $20 billion of the need total comes from bridges off the federal highway system. The quality of these bridges varies widely from state to state, as does the traffic they carry. In many cases, these bridges are the remnants of an earlier rural highway demand, and some proportion could be posted for reduced loads or actually abandoned with only modest public inconvenience.

While the $51 billion figure is impressive, we can probably manage our real problems for half that amount. And if bridges constitute a clear investment priority, current levels of capital spending by state and local governments are great enough to meet that amount over a few years. Part of the difficulty in assessing infrastructure need, however, is that "need" is a moving target, reflecting not only structural conditions (the "crumbling" and "decaying" that usually preface the term "infrastructure") but also changing definitions and preferences.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What is "need"?

Consider the most recent federal estimates for highway investment needs, completed in 1991. The FHWA's "improve 1989 condition and performance" model calls for eliminating a backlog of current highway deficiencies at a total cost of $400 billion. Annual spending would have to range between $60 and $68 billion per year, or almost three times current levels, to meet this total need. Yet 72 percent of the need amount reflects congestion and traffic-carrying capacity—the presumed requirement for continuing to add new lanes of highway to meet traffic demand. Only 28 percent of the spending would be devoted to improving or maintaining existing pavement quality. The "need" to add a vast number of new lanes of freeway and expressway, almost all in developed urban areas, generates an enormous figure for the purchase of land and right-of-way. In fact, many economists recognize that adding new lanes and new highways is about the least efficient way to deal with traffic demand at peak commuting times. Alternative pricing schemes or changes in commuting times and patterns could more effectively deal with rush-hour congestion. By lumping the massive cost of building new highways together with the more commonly understood issue of roadway quality, we can get an enormous "need" figure that is probably unnecessary and unattainable in the context of local highway politics.

The myth of vast infrastructure spending needs reflects not only national programs and policies, but local circumstances as well. Again, enormous needs in dollar terms can often be broken down into much more realistic assessments of required spending. One declining central city, St. Louis, provides just such an example.

A 1991 assessment of St. Louis' capital needs came up with a total of more than $239 million in spending requirements. With the city's existing capital spending coming to just over $8 million per year, the city would need some twenty-eight years to meet its current capital needs. Some of these needs reflect real short-term problems, such as replacement of underground storage tanks for $1 million and a new siren warning system. But other items reflect the city's failure to invest in maintenance and renewal for decades, like the $48.5 million item for renovating city parks. And other capital "needs" are simply wish-list projects that carry

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

some political payoff, like $15 million required for economic-development projects and another project to develop a "multimodal passenger terminal" to link trains, buses, and light-rail systems in the downtown core. Indeed, the city's capital-need figure even includes $35 million for renovating curbs and alleys that have received essentially no city attention since they were first built. Such a "need" could be addressed simply by assessing property owners for the cost of repairs, as many other cities have done.

Financing infrastructure

One final myth of urban infrastructure, particularly current in recent months, is the notion that state and local governments are so strapped and constrained as to be incapable of meeting their own needs. This view of state and local incapacity has been particularly heightened by stories of declining government revenues and fiscal cutbacks in the wake of recession. States and localities do face a tough fiscal time today. But those fiscal problems do not necessarily limit capital spending and infrastructure investment.

As noted earlier, the figures on state and local capital spending in recent years show steady and regular increases. Those increases have largely continued through early 1992. This continued pattern of steady or rising capital investment in infrastructure, even in a recession, is understandable in light of the mechanisms for financing public works. Highway building, the major spending category, is principally financed through motor-fuel and vehicle taxes tied to car ownership and mileage, which are quite resistant to economic downturns. Water and sewer system investment is similarly financed through dedicated user fees that reflect water usage and that remain quite stable over time. And for many local governments, the bond issues that support infrastructure construction are tied to specific revenue sources independent of national economic conditions. Indeed, voters have proven quite supportive of infrastructure bond proposals even in recent months. St. Louis saw the passage of a $1.5 billion airport expansion plan in November 1991. And voters around the country approved more than 75 percent of all non-education bond proposals voted on in 1991, including 98 percent of the more than $2 billion in proposed transportation bonds. Thus, while

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sales and income tax revenues have dropped for many state and local governments, the fiscal capacity to finance capital investment has remained.

Bad choices

While many state and local governments have been boosting infrastructure-related revenues and spending, some governments have chosen to avoid higher taxes or new public debt. This avoidance of infrastructure funding has not been a product of the "tax revolt" or a lack of public interest. It has instead quite often been the result of a failure of political leadership and initiative, with mayors and governors content to promote the politics of job creation while avoiding mounting public needs. These locales have *chosen* not to use their resources to invest in meeting their own infrastructure needs.

Take the case of highway investment. The vast bulk of revenue for highway maintenance and capital spending comes from taxes on vehicles and fuel, amounting to 78 percent of state highway revenues in 1989. For decades, fixed gas tax rates and fees provided a stable source of revenues. But in the 1970s and beyond, inflation substantially eroded the revenues from these sources. The fiscal solution was simple—higher gas taxes, just to keep up with inflation. But while some states regularly raised tax rates, others fell far behind. Take the case of two states, Iowa and California, with exactly the same gas tax rate of 7 cents per gallon in 1966. Iowa boosted its tax in 1978, 1981, and again in 1985. Today, after additional increases, that gas tax rate is 20 cents per gallon. California first raised its tax—to 9 cents—in 1983, and now it stands at 16 cents per gallon, lagging well behind other states. Some state governments have managed to boost tax rates and invest in bridges and highways, despite the possible political fallout from tax increases. But many state governments let highway investment fall in relative terms, despite evidence of need. New York has maintained an 8-cent-per-gallon tax without change since 1973, while neighboring Connecticut imposes a 25-cent-per-gallon rate.

For most cities, substantial spending on infrastructure projects requires the use of long-term debt, spreading the cost of highways, streets, and sewer systems over twenty or thirty years. Debt financing commonly requires direct public approval through

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a vote to support a bond-issue proposal. While some locales like New York City have the capacity to issue debt without public approval, forty-two states require a vote. By approving a bond issue, the electorate also commits itself to the taxes required to repay it. Urban capital spending thus need not directly compete for local revenues with such immediate priorities as police protection or aid to the homeless.

Bond issues built the modern American city. In Chicago, for example, local voters faced a total of ninety-two individual bond proposals from 1910 through 1927, involving more than $230 million in new debt. That $230 million in bonds would translate into $1.8 billion in 1987 dollars. And the city's voters endorsed more than 85 percent of the value of these proposals, supporting more than $180 million in new bonds. It was this public support and the consequent investment that created the city's complex of boulevards and major avenues, built a new downtown bridge system, and paid for the development of North Michigan Avenue as a major business locale.

Bond votes provided the capacity for state and local governments to build and expand infrastructure through the 1950s and 1960s. The constant-dollar volume of state and local bond proposals on the ballot tracks the infrastructure-investment boom through the 1960s very closely, particularly when school spending is excluded. Although the annual volume would routinely increase in even, election years compared with non-election years, the overall trend was up during the first part of the post-World War II period. But after a peak of about $43 billion in 1968 (in 1987 dollars), the volume of bond proposals fell quite sharply during the 1970s.

Some of the decrease in proposed bond issues reflected changing political realities. The voters' mood changed in the early 1970s, and a far greater proportion of bond proposals were voted down. That shift presaged the "tax revolt" of the mid-1970s and the adoption of California's Proposition 13, for example. State and local elected officials no doubt responded to the public's aversion by avoiding new bond proposals. And an increasing volume of relatively unrestricted federal aid (under the revenue-sharing and Community Development Block Grant programs), as well as new assistance for sewage treatment and sewer systems, may well have offered elected officials an alternative source of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

capital-investment funds. The ultimate result was a dramatic drop in the volume of bond proposals on the ballot. That reduced level of voted proposals has continued in recent years. Thus in 1991, the voters faced a total of $6.66 billion in non-education bond proposals (in 1987 dollars) and approved 77 percent. The 1991 proposal amount was actually less than the volume in 1987 and even slightly less than the value of bond proposals in 1981. Most remarkably, after adjusting for inflation, the 1991 bond proposal amount was only 27 percent of the amount voted on in 1969.

Investment in infrastructure has long been tied to popular support. Today, the public's approval rate for new bond issues, particularly those for transportation infrastructure, continues to be substantial. What has changed is the set of investment choices that voters face. In city after city, bond proposals have all but disappeared from the ballot. Promoting bond issues and capital spending carries with it political risk, and the appearance of raising local taxes. Even though the level of state and local infrastructure investment has soared in recent years, the fiscal choices faced by the voters remain quite limited. The result has been a dramatic shift, both in what government builds and where it is built.

Spending in St. Louis

The shifting politics of local infrastructure investment can be readily seen in the case of an older central city like St. Louis. For decades, St. Louis financed its capital spending with bond issues approved by the voters. These paid for everything from a city auditorium and civic center to a new hospital, streets and highways, parks, and urban renewal. These bond issues translated into regular increases in the city's debt. The city's general obligation debt increased from $72 million in 1950 to $128 million in 1960 and almost $150 million in 1968 (all in nominal dollars). But the city gradually began to move away from capital spending during the 1970s. By 1980, its debt had fallen to $86 million. Adjusting for the impact of inflation, the drop was even more remarkable. In 1987 dollars, debt fell from $395 million in 1970 to $90 million in 1980. And during this period, the city's capital spending from its own fiscal resources effectively evaporated, falling to only $18 million by 1992 (again in 1987 dollars).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The general move away from bond proposals by many cities, beginning in the 1970s, was certainly evident in St. Louis. One major package of bonds totalling $110 million was largely defeated in 1974. The city's reluctance to address capital-spending needs continued well after that date and through the 1980s. Only two small bond proposals appeared on the ballot in the 1980s, for a police-communication system and fire stations. Both passed with more than the required two-thirds majority. The city's current debt amounts to only $18 million, compared to the $90 million of 1980 and the $575 million of 1960 (all in 1987 dollars).

The debt decline has also had a marked impact on property taxes. In past decades, new bond issues meant stable or increasing property taxes for bond repayment. But with no new bond issues, the city's property taxes have been dropping year by year, although the majority of the city's assessed value consists of commercial real estate that provides a solid tax base.

Convention centers, stadiums, and airports

The modest level of debt and infrastructure investment in contemporary St. Louis is only one part of the city's public spending story. The city has proven quite adept at financing and building certain projects in recent years. These projects just do not include streets and bridges.

The one major bond proposal that did reach the voters in recent years, as mentioned above, called for a $1.5 billion expansion of Lambert-St. Louis International Airport, a scheme promising the creation of thousands of new jobs and local economic growth. Despite an absence of detailed planning for the expansion project and much local debate, the city's voters provided a 64 percent majority in favor of the revenue bonds. The city is also in the process of developing two major new public facilities in the downtown business district. The city's convention center, originally approved by the voters in 1972 and opened in 1977, is currently being expanded at a cost of almost $120 million. The convention-center expansion is being financed by an independent public authority, neatly avoiding constraints on the city's spending (and the requirement for voter approval of bonds). Still, the city is obliged to spend almost $10 million per year under a lease arrangement.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Adjacent to the convention center, the city—along with the state and county—is financing and building a new domed stadium to serve a hoped-for National Football League team. The stadium project will cost another $245 million, with the city contributing $60 million. Once again, there was no public vote on the project, despite its roughly $6 million in annual lease payment cost to the city. Compared to St. Louis' current capital budget of $6.6 million, the annual spending for the dome and convention center represents an enormous fiscal commitment. St. Louis clearly has developed a kind of "two-track" system for funding capital investments. Some needs, like streets, bridges, and parks, have been consistently put on the back burner or ignored. Other capital projects—principally those targeted to attract tourists or boost the fortunes of the downtown core area—have received substantial support. These projects enjoy their own dedicated revenue sources, such as a restaurant-meals tax for the convention-center expansion, and are therefore not obliged to compete with other public needs.

The choice of convention centers, stadiums, and airports as public-spending priorities serves to aid local business interests and holds the promise of boosting economic growth. Moreover, it can be advantageous to a big city mayor (like St. Louis' Vincent Schoemel or former Atlanta mayor Andrew Young) who seeks to run for higher, statewide office with a record of low taxes and expansive new job creation. But it can also mean that other, longer-term needs are avoided or deferred.

St. Louis, like many other cities, undoubtedly has infrastructure needs and a host of other urban ills. But its funding choices reflect a political problem that would not necessarily be solved by a one-time infusion of federal dollars. Federal assistance would have to be filtered through the same local political system that has consistently sought to avoid bond proposals, limit voter review, constrain capital investment, and boost the economic fortunes of downtown. Indeed, when "no strings" federal revenue-sharing arrived in 1972, the city employed most of the new aid to substitute for city revenues in paying for the original development of the Cervantes Convention Center. When short-term federal assistance for local public works became available in 1977, city officials chose to build a pedestrian connection between the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Convention Center and downtown buildings, along with other public works.

The St. Louis case is not unique. Other major cities, including Atlanta, Kansas City, and Cleveland, have succeeded in avoiding new bond proposals and in limiting their capital investment. In Cleveland, the voters last faced a bond proposal on the ballot in 1969. The inevitable result has been a drop in real city debt and a mounting toll of infrastructure need, even as investment in economic development projects and convention centers has soared.

Chicago's recent flooding catastrophe provides an example of just this sort of policy mismatch. Even as the collapse of part of the downtown tunnel system serves as a symbol of aging infrastructure and presumed urban need, Chicago is embarking on the largest single public building project in its history, a plan to enlarge its McCormick Place convention facility by more than 60 percent, adding one million square feet of new exhibit space, with a total price tag of $987 million. Although some argue that the new McCormick Place will eventually pay for itself and generate thousands of new jobs in the city, construction will require new taxes on downtown restaurants, automobile rentals, and local hotel rooms, and a special airport departure fee.

State priorities

The relationship between infrastructure "need" and the question of political choice can also be seen in state spending decisions, where there is often a preference for new building and economic development. Take the case of Texas. The state reported almost 1,000 structurally deficient federal-aid bridges in 1990, and another 3,644 bridges were deemed "functionally obsolete." That leaves Texas with the second largest total of "bad bridges" in the nation, right behind New York. Yet Texas has ample resources of its own to invest in bridge renewal and repair. It has steadily raised its gasoline tax in recent years, from 5 cents a gallon in 1984 to 20 cents today. And in 1991 the state spent about $3 billion on highways, including almost $1.8 billion on new construction. These expenditures include millions for widening Interstate highways, double-decking freeways, and building entirely new roads (including one providing access to a new theme park in San Antonio). The state could clearly address—and solve—its bridge problems with its own resources if it chose.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

There is no particular reason for Texas to renew or replace all those thousands of bridges which add to the national totals of "need." Many of them carry light traffic loads or serve limited areas. The "functionally obsolete" bridges may simply have narrow shoulders or be subject to occasional flooding of the roadway. Indeed, the state's preferences are clearly shown by the way it spent $568 million for maintenance in 1991. Bridge maintenance received merely one percent of the state's total maintenance spending. To build a national policy on the assumption that Texas should replace or renew all of its 4,635 troubled federal-aid-system structures makes little sense. Just as St. Louis chooses convention centers rather than parks or bridges, so states quite commonly choose new construction and expansion over renewal and rehabilitation. Sometimes this is appropriate; sometimes it is not.

Restructuring choices

Thus, the central issue in dealing with contemporary infrastructure needs is restructuring the choice process at the state and local levels, and encouraging all levels of government to invest seriously in reasonable renewal and rehabilitation efforts rather than in new development. Federal highway policy should begin to emphasize renewal and repair over new construction, rewarding those states that increase their own fiscal effort with greater federal aid. Aid for bridge replacement and renewal should also encourage state-level effort and attention, rather than promoting the perverse set of incentives whereby an ever-larger count of "bad" bridges helps states secure more federal aid. If some states can manage to care for their stock of bridges and highways, they should properly serve as national models and be supported by national investment policy. Federal policy should promote attention to real infrastructure needs. The contrast between rusting bridges and brand-new stadiums in cities like St. Louis and Atlanta starkly demonstrates that more dollars alone will not provide a solution to those infrastructure problems that do remain around the United States.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In praise of pork

JOHN W. ELLWOOD & ERIC M. PATASHNIK

IN A WHITE HOUSE address last March, President Bush challenged Congress to cut $5.7 billion of pork barrel projects to help reduce the deficit. Among the projects Bush proposed eliminating were such congressional favorites as funding for asparagus research, mink reproduction, and local parking garages. The examples he cited would be funny, said the President, "if the effect weren't so serious." Bush announced he would work with House Republicans to bring these items to a vote individually—a strategy designed to embarrass congressional Democrats before the November elections by forcing them to take public stands on scores of questionable programs.

But Bush never received the individual votes he wanted. What he got instead was a one-shot $8.2 billion omnibus spending-reduction package, passed by veto-proof margins in both the House and Senate. While the measure's budget reductions far exceeded the amount requested by the President, it left intact most of the specific programs that Bush had targeted for extinc-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion. Moreover, the vast majority of the bill's spending cuts ($7.2 billion) came from defense programs. In an act of pork barrel revenge, the measure also eliminated approximately $2 million of special executive-branch research projects—a reminder to Bush that Congress does not take kindly to attacks on its ability to bring home the bacon.

Such episodes are a regular occurrence in Washington. Indeed, since the first Congress convened in 1789 and debated whether to build a lighthouse to protect the Chesapeake Bay, legislators of both parties have attempted to deliver federal funds back home for capital improvements and other projects, while presidents have tried to excise pork from the congressional diet. During his first one hundred days in office, for example, Jimmy Carter announced that he intended to terminate funding for some 320 water projects he said were wasteful and environmentally unsound. The only thing that came to an end, however, was the Carter honeymoon on Capitol Hill. Ronald Reagan vetoed spending for more than 120 special highway "demonstration" projects in 1987. When the override vote came, however, even top Republicans voted against the President in order to maintain the flow of funds to their districts.

Is pork necessary?

In recent years, public outrage over government waste has run high. Many observers see pork barrel spending not only as a symbol of an out-of-control Congress but as a leading cause of the nation's worsening budget deficit. To cite one prominent example, *Washington Post* editor Brian Kelly claims in his recent book, *Adventures in Porkland: Why Washington Can't Stop Spending Your Money*, that the 1992 federal budget alone contains $97 billion of pork projects so entirely without merit that they could be "lopped out" without affecting the "welfare of the nation."

Kelly's claims are surely overblown. For example, he includes the lower prices that consumers would pay if certain price supports were withdrawn, even though these savings (while certainly desirable) would for the most part not show up in the government's ledgers. Yet reductions in pork barrel spending have also been advocated by those who acknowledge that pork, properly measured, comprises only a tiny fraction of total federal outlays. For example, Kansas Democrat Jim Slattery, who led

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the battle in the House in 1991 against using $500,000 in federal funds to turn Lawrence Welk's birthplace into a shrine, told *Common Cause Magazine,* "it's important from the standpoint of restoring public confidence in Congress to show we are prepared to stop wasteful spending," even if the cuts are only symbolic. In a similar vein, a recent *Newsweek* cover story, while conceding that "cutting out the most extreme forms of pork wouldn't eliminate the federal deficit," emphasizes that doing so "would demonstrate that Washington has the political will to reform its profligate ways."

The premise of these statements is that the first thing anyone—whether an individual consumer or the United States government—trying to save money should cut out is the fluff. As *Time* magazine rhetorically asks: "when Congress is struggling without much success to reduce the federal budget deficit, the question naturally arises: is pork *really* necessary?"

Our answer is yes. We believe in pork not because every new dam or overpass deserves to be funded, nor because we consider pork an appropriate instrument of fiscal policy (there are more efficient ways of stimulating a $5 trillion economy). Rather, we think that pork, doled out strategically, can help to sweeten an otherwise unpalatable piece of legislation.

No bill tastes so bitter to the average member of Congress as one that raises taxes or cuts popular programs. Any credible deficit-reduction package will almost certainly have to do both. In exchange for an increase in pork barrel spending, however, members of Congress just might be willing to bite the bullet and make the politically difficult decisions that will be required if the federal deficit is ever to be brought under control.

In a perfect world it would not be necessary to bribe elected officials to perform their jobs well. But, as James Madison pointed out two centuries ago in *Federalist* 51, men are not angels and we do not live in a perfect world. The object of government is therefore not to suppress the imperfections of human nature, which would be futile, but rather to harness the pursuit of self-interest to public ends.

Unfortunately, in the debate over how to reduce the deficit, Madison's advice has all too often gone ignored. Indeed, if there is anything the major budget-reform proposals of the last decade (Gramm-Rudman, the balanced-budget amendment, an entitle-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment cap) have in common, it is that in seeking to impose artificial limits on government spending without offering anything in return, they work against the electoral interests of congressmen instead of with them—which is why these reforms have been so vigorously resisted.

No reasonable observer would argue that pork barrel spending has always been employed as a force for good or that there are no pork projects that would have been better left unbuilt. But singling out pork as the culprit for our fiscal troubles directs attention away from the largest sources of budgetary growth and contributes to the illusion that the budget can be balanced simply by eliminating waste and abuse. While proposals to achieve a pork-free budget are not without superficial appeal, they risk depriving leaders trying to enact real deficit-reduction measures of one of the most effective coalition-building tools at their disposal.

What is pork?

In order to appreciate why congressmen are so enamored of pork it is helpful to understand exactly what pork is. But defining pork is not as easy as it sounds. According to *Congressional Quarterly*, pork is usually considered to be "wasteful" spending that flows to a particular state or district in order to please voters back home. Like beauty, however, waste is in the eye of the beholder. As University of Michigan budget expert Edward M. Gramlich puts it, "one guy's pork is another guy's red meat." To a district plagued by double-digit unemployment, a new highway project is a sound investment, regardless of local transportation needs.

Some scholars simply define pork as any program that is economically inefficient—that is, any program whose total costs exceed its total benefits. But this definition tars with the same brush both real pork and programs that, while inefficient, can be justified on grounds of distributional equity or in which geographic legislative influence is small or nonexistent.

A more promising approach is suggested by political scientist David Mayhew in his 1974 book, *Congress: The Electoral Connection*. According to Mayhew, congressional life consists largely of "a relentless search" for ways of claiming credit for making good things happen back home and thereby increasing the likeli-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hood of remaining in office. Because there are 535 congressmen and not one, each individual congressman must try to "peel off pieces of governmental accomplishment for which he can believably generate a sense of responsibility." For most congressmen, the easiest way of doing this is to supply goods to their home districts.

From this perspective, the ideal pork barrel project has three key properties. First, benefits are conferred on a specific geographical constituency small enough to allow a single congressman to be recognized as the benefactor. Second, benefits are given out in such a fashion as to lead constituents to believe that the congressman had a hand in the allocation. Third, costs resulting from the project are widely diffused or otherwise obscured from taxpayer notice.

Political pork, then, offers a congressman's constituents an array of benefits at little apparent cost. Because pork projects are easily distinguished by voters from the ordinary outputs of government, they provide an incumbent with the opportunity to portray himself as a "prime mover" who deserves to be reelected. When a congressman attends a ribbon-cutting ceremony for a shiny new building in his district, every voter can *see* that he is accomplishing something in Washington.[1]

The quest for local benefits

The idea that congressmen work relentlessly to supply pork to their districts, even at the expense of the wider public interest, has a distinguished pedigree. In a 1975 *Public Interest* article, "The Social Pork Barrel," David Stockman (a then-obscure legislative aide to John Anderson) condemned liberal and conservative congressmen alike for subordinating the proper aims of social policy to their desire to shower the benefits of government programs on as many constituent groups as possible. In the case of the Title I compensatory-education program, for example,

[1]This conception of pork, to be sure, ignores a great deal of special-interest influence on Congressmen affecting environmental and product-safety regulations, agricultural subsidies, and trade restrictions, among other things. But if everything government does is pork, nothing is. Part of what makes pork special, at least in terms of fiscal policy, is that most of its costs directly result in budgetary outlays. What truly distinguishes pork from generic special-interest legislation, however, is that members of Congress—owing to the electoral imperative—have a much greater personal stake in the former than in the latter.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stockman described how Congress took a program "designed to raise the educational achievement level of the poorest of the poor," who are primarily concentrated in inner cities, and expanded it into a general education program covering 80 percent of the nation's school districts.

A similar expansion took place in the Model Cities program. As envisioned by President Johnson in a 1966 address to Congress, the program was to funnel billions in demonstration grants to the nation's ten most severely distressed cities, thereby testing whether comprehensive aid could alleviate urban poverty. By the time the program became law, however, 150 cities were eligible for assistance. With so many localities in line, funds had to be parceled out in extremely small amounts. The inevitable result was that the program had little impact anywhere. To Stockman, boondoggles like these were yet more evidence that the vast increase in social-welfare spending that took place over the 1960s and 1970s "had created in its wake a political maintenance system based in no small part on the co-optation and incorporation of Congress itself."

The distributive tendency that Stockman identified has continued to shape congressional policymaking. Indeed, Melissa P. Collie of the University of Texas, in her 1988 survey of the political science literature on pork, concludes that there is a consensus among scholars that serving narrow interests at the general public's expense is what Congress does "most if not best." According to *Congressional Quarterly*, the fiscal 1992 appropriations bill included millions of dollars for federal building projects requested by individual legislators. Among the winners was House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-MO), who pushed through a request for a $30 million federal building and courthouse in St. Louis.

The wrong culprit

But if the quest for local benefits leaves an unmistakable imprint on fiscal politics, the argument that pork barrel spending has been the engine behind the growth of federal outlays in recent years is simply wrong. In cataloguing the various types of taxpayer-funded pork, Stockman included billions of dollars spent on social-insurance entitlement programs such as Social Security and Medicare. While there can be no doubt that these programs

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

benefit organized groups whose members include many well-off citizens not in dire need of government assistance (that, after all, is why they are so popular), they certainly are not pork barrel programs in the classic sense.

While traditional pork barrel programs provide benefits to specific geographic constituencies as the (apparent) result of the actions of individual legislators, entitlement programs confer benefits on every eligible person as a matter of legal right. Thus, as Mayhew writes, "congressmen get no credit" for the mere handing out of checks. Were individual congressmen truly attempting simply to maximize their chances of receiving electoral credit it would be hard to devise a less effective way of spending taxpayer money.

Yet it is precisely these entitlement programs, which give congressmen negligible opportunities for credit-claiming, that are primarily responsible for the tremendous growth in federal spending. Entitlement payments and other mandatory outlays climbed from 5.8 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 1962 to 11.0 percent in 1980, and to 11.3 percent in 1991. About half of all federal spending now goes towards mandatory programs.

By contrast, expenditures for domestic discretionary programs declined from a high of 4.9 percent of GDP in 1980 to 3.5 percent of GDP in 1991. In other words, while all programs grew when New Deal and Great Society liberalism dominated Washington, when the nation turned to fiscal conservatism in the 1980s it was domestic discretionary spending, not entitlements, that got squeezed.

What is most remarkable about this pattern is that some of the biggest discretionary cutbacks occurred in programs with the largest concentration of geographic benefits:

Water and Power Projects. When measured in constant 1987 dollars, direct federal spending for the construction and rehabilitation of water and power projects fell from $5.8 billion in 1980 to $4.3 billion in 1991, a decline of 26 percent. During this same period, overall federal spending rose by 35 percent in real terms.

Construction Grants. When measured in constant 1987 dollars, expenditures for grants to state and local governments for the construction of buildings and other facilities declined

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

from $27.6 billion in 1980 to $23.8 billion in 1991, a decline of 14 percent. Several large grant programs were dismantled altogether.

Other Intergovernmental Grants. When measured in constant 1987 dollars, expenditures for the wide variety of non-construction grants-in-aid other than those for formula-driven payments to individuals fell from $53.7 billion in 1980 to $30.1 billion in 1991, a decline of 44 percent.

These trends are hard to square with the claims of those who insist that legislators are focusing most of their energies on pork barrel activities. In fact, according to R. Douglas Arnold, a Princeton University political scientist and one of the first researchers to investigate the matter empirically, if anything the impact of pork on federal spending "seems to be diminishing."

Other budget experts agree. "The role of pork in the budget has declined," said John L. Palmer, senior fellow at the Urban Institute, in a widely noted 1988 *Washington Post* article. "It just isn't a significant budget item—if it ever was." While the drop in pork barrel spending has not been precisely quantified, Charles Schultze, former chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, in 1988 estimated the amount of pork in the budget at "no more than $10 billion." This works out to less than 1 percent of federal outlays that year and about 6.3 percent of domestic discretionary spending.

What caused the pork barrel to shrink? While numerous factors played a contributing role—including changes in the law requiring localities benefiting from water projects to shoulder a significant share of the cost—by far the most important was the pressure Congress felt from Ronald Reagan to reduce domestic spending. Legislators are rarely happy to limit their ability to feed at the political trough, of course. But as Arnold points out in *The Logic of Congressional Action*, the only alternative was to cut middle-class entitlements like Social Security—something Congress was not yet prepared to do. Writes Arnold, "In times of fiscal austerity, when legislators must cut something, it is less risky to reduce future opportunities for credit claiming than it is to be associated with terminating constituents' regular supply [of benefits]."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Controlling entitlements

The fact that entitlements involve a regular supply of benefits explains why controlling these programs is essential to reducing the deficit. Imagine there are just two government programs, both funded at $5 billion a year. One is a classic pork program—it funds the construction of public works in individual districts. The other is an entitlement—it provides a monthly check to disabled federal workers. Each year the amount of the check is adjusted for inflation. Assume as well that legislators do not care about what is "good" public policy; they are interested only in their reelection. If voters are constantly asking—"What have you done for me lately?"—what must legislators do to increase their chances of remaining in office?

In the case of the public works program, each year's spending will lead to the construction of new buildings, highways, and so forth, and the legislator will get credit for each new project that is built in his district. If the $5 billion finances one hundred projects this year, it creates one hundred credit-claiming opportunities. Next year's $5 billion appropriation leads to one hundred more opportunities for receiving electoral credit. Pork, then, results in a continual stream of credit-claiming opportunities without a need to raise the level of spending. In tough economic times, legislators can simply cut back the number or size of projects funded. Since curtailing programs that provide one-time construction grants imposes costs primarily on future beneficiaries, the risk of electoral retribution is likely to be small. In terms of long-term fiscal restraint, pork is thus a highly controllable source of spending.

In the case of the entitlement program, however, recipients are guaranteed a regular flow of benefits. As a result, the only way for legislators to gain additional credit is to increase the eligible population or the benefit level of the program. Unlike funding a new building, however, increasing the size of an entitlement check creates a new threshold of beneficiary expectations. Moreover, since program beneficiaries typically assume that the current amount of their checks—including any cost-of-living adjustment (COLA)—is theirs as a matter of right, legislators know they will be blamed for any reduction in benefit levels. While congressmen may get no credit for the simple handing out of checks, theirs will be the hand that gets slapped if voters

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

find that their benefits have been slashed. In a period of fiscal austerity, members of Congress thus face doubly strong incentives to look elsewhere for savings.

The major reason entitlements are so dangerous to the nation's long-term fiscal health, then, is that they are a politically addictive form of public spending. Just as smoking one cigarette can lead to smoking a second and then to a three-pack-a-day habit, paying out entitlement benefits today makes it hard for legislators to resist the impulse to pay out benefits tomorrow.

Another reason entitlement spending is so tough for Congress to control is that it is driven by formulas written into multi-year or permanent authorizations. As a result, members seeking to reduce spending for a given entitlement program have to bring about a change in the law, while those seeking to maintain current funding levels need only stall. In contrast, the burden of action for pork programs, which are funded primarily through annual appropriations, rests with spending proponents.

Real reform

What can be done to put the brake on entitlement spending while maintaining credit-claiming opportunities for congressmen? Two useful reforms have been suggested by Berkeley political scientist Aaron Wildavsky, author of the classic study of federal budgeting. In testimony before Congress on the potential impact of amending the Constitution to require a balanced budget, Wildavsky emphasized that simply mandating fiscal balance is unlikely to succeed. A more effective approach, Wildavsky stated, would be to eliminate all cost-of-living allowances for entitlements, and to change entitlement program status so that no more than 95 percent of any given entitlement's current funding would be guaranteed for the following year. While Wildavsky emphasized the immediate effect these reforms would have on limiting government expenditures, we would stress their potential to change the incentives lawmakers face. Were these changes adopted, members of Congress would be able to vote and receive credit for periodic entitlement increases and tax cuts without increasing the overall level of spending or the deficit.

This in fact was the system that governed Social Security prior to 1972 and periodic tax reductions prior to 1981. When COLAs were introduced for Social Security in 1972 and income-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tax indexing was enacted in 1981, many budget experts argued that these changes over time would lead to smaller increases in social-insurance spending and would hold the line on tax burdens. A comparison of both Social Security expenditures and income-tax revenues before and after these changes, however, provides no evidence that the desired effects were achieved.

What has been lost by putting these parts of the budget on "automatic pilot" is the opportunity for congressmen to claim credit for any portion of their constituents' regular supply of benefits—along with the chance for elected officials to do good by doing well. If reducing the federal deficit is a major policy task for the next decade, think how much better it would be if congressmen could take credit for restoring even a portion of the 5 percent of an entitlement's annual funding that would no longer be guaranteed, or for adjusting benefit levels partially for inflation. Not only would congressmen be better situated to entertain serious deficit-reduction proposals, but much of the pressure members face to constantly increase government spending in order to satisfy the electoral imperative would be eased.

The golden-parachute model

Significant reductions in the federal deficit have not occurred over the past decade largely because the actions necessary to achieve these reductions have no electoral payoff for legislators. Few, if any, representatives or senators have been defeated because of the deficit. By contrast, numerous incumbents have lost their seats because of support for tax increases or spending cuts.

But if legislators care intensely about re-election, the appropriate deficit-reduction strategy is neither to scold congressmen for their moral depravity nor to set budgetary traps like Gramm-Rudman, from which creative legislative minds will quickly learn how to escape. A more productive approach would be to accept the basic self-interestedness of politicians as a given, and find ways of exploiting it for the collective good. A useful private-sector model here is the creation of "golden parachute" provisions for executives whose firms are the targets of corporate takeovers. While takeovers clearly benefit the shareholders of targeted companies, managers of such companies have a record of opposing takeover attempts, since their own jobs are often at stake. Generous severance payments give executives the security

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they need to do right by their firm's shareholders when negotiating with a corporate raider. Similarly, congressmen who support deficit-reduction measures can be protected from electoral risks if given additional opportunities to claim credit for the delivery of pork.

One major advantage of this approach (as opposed to procedural tinkering and moral exhortation) is that it has actually worked. A recent example was the inclusion of so-called "transition rules" in the landmark 1986 tax-reform legislation, which lowered the top marginal tax rate for individuals from 50 to 33 percent. To make up the resulting loss of revenue, the measure eliminated exemptions, deductions, and numerous other special tax preferences—a tradeoff that greatly increased the efficiency and equity of the tax code.

Many of these tax preferences, however, were strongly supported by powerful economic interests, making their termination a politically difficult task. In order to hold the reform coalition together, nearly 700 temporary transition rules were added to exempt particular firms or groups of taxpayers located in the home states of key legislators. For example, Senator Robert Dole of Kansas, then the Republican majority leader, was rewarded for his support of reform with a tax preference for the redevelopment of Manhattan, Kansas.

The inclusion of new tax breaks in a sweeping tax-reform bill was widely criticized in the press as the most hypocritical kind of pork barreling. An objective assessment of these transition rules, however, requires answers to the same basic questions that economists pose when evaluating the utility of a golden parachute. Was the long-term benefit of a broadening of the tax base and a reduction in marginal rates greater than the temporary cost of the special provisions? Were more generous transition rules granted than were required? In their fascinating diary of the tax-reform bill's unlikely triumph, *Showdown at Gucci Gulch*, *Wall Street Journal* reporters Jeffrey H. Birnbaum and Alan S. Murray concluded that the transition rules of the 1986 act, which were estimated to cost the Treasury $11 billion over five years, were indeed essential in helping Congress find the political courage to close hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of permanent tax loopholes. "Even the most committed congres-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sional reformers realized that these relatively small provisions were a necessary price to pay," they wrote.

The strategic use of pork was mastered by Wilbur Mills, the legendary former chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee. During most of Mills' tenure as chairman, Ways and Means had jurisdiction not only over tax legislation but also over the assignment of Democratic members to the other standing committees of the House. In light of the Ways and Means Committee's extraordinary power, the main criterion for determining which Democrats would be placed on the committee was loyalty to the party leadership. Expertise in tax matters, by contrast, counted for very little. This, however, created a problem for the institutional maintenance of the House: Could Mills prevent members of Ways and Means who knew nothing and cared less about "good" tax policy from using their positions on the committee as a platform for the processing of special tax measures favored by their constituents and colleagues?

One strategy Mills used to keep committee members in line was the annual tax-expenditure bill. Each year Ways and Means would report out a bill containing one—and only one—special tax provision for each member of the committee, subject to a dollar limit on the total amount. The beauty of the bill was that in return for a yearly credit-claiming opportunity of limited fiscal scope, Mills was able to discipline the membership of the most powerful revenue committee in the Congress. Moreover, the annual tax-expenditure bill satisfied the standards of a "good" golden parachute—it provided pork only to key players and its revenue loss was controlled.

A spoonful of pork makes the deficit go down

"It's outrageous that you've got to have such political payoffs to get Congress to do the nation's business," says James Miller, OMB director under Ronald Reagan. Miller's outrage is understandable but ultimately unproductive. Human nature and the electoral imperative being what they are, the pork barrel is here to stay.

But if pork is a permanent part of the political landscape, it is incumbent upon leaders to ensure that taxpayers get something for their money. Our most effective presidents have been those who have linked the distribution of pork to the achieve-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ment of critical national objectives. When Franklin Roosevelt discovered he could not develop an atomic bomb without the support of Tennessee Senator Kenneth McKellar, chairman of the Appropriations Committee, he readily agreed to locate the bomb facility in Oak Ridge. By contrast, our least effective presidents—Jimmy Carter comes to mind—have either given away plum projects for nothing or waged hopeless battles against pork, squandering scarce political capital and weakening their ability to govern in the process.

The real value of pork projects ultimately lies in their ability to induce rational legislators into taking electorally risky actions for the sake of the public good.[2] Over the last ten years, as the discretionary part of the budget has shrunk, congressmen have had fewer and fewer opportunities to claim credit for directly aiding their constituents. As Brookings scholar R. Kent Weaver has argued, in an era of scarcity and difficult political choices, many legislators gave up on trying to accomplish anything positive, focusing their energies instead on blame avoidance. The result has been the creation of a political climate in which elected officials now believe the only way they can bring the nation back to fiscal health is to injure their own electoral chances. This cannot be good for the future of the republic.

Politics got us into the deficit mess, however, and only politics can get us out. According to both government and private estimates, annual deficits will soar after the mid-1990s, and could exceed $600 billion in 2002 if the economy performs poorly. Virtually every prominent mainstream economist agrees that reducing the deficit significantly will require Congress to do what it has been strenuously trying to avoid for more than a decade—rein in spending for Social Security, Medicare, and other popular, middle-class entitlement programs. Tax increases may also be necessary. From the vantage point of the average legislator, the risk of electoral retribution seems enormous.

If reductions in popular programs and increases in taxes are required to put our national economic house back in order, the

[2]This is not to say that pork is inherently wasteful. Indeed, a recent study of water-construction projects at the Army Corps of Engineers by John A. Hird of the University of Massachusetts found that concern for economic efficiency plays a prominent role in the project-selection process, due in large measure to the Corps' use of cost-benefit analysis.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

strategic use of pork to obtain the support of key legislators for these measures will be crucial. The 1990 budget pact took a few steps in this direction, but it did not go far enough. According to the *National Journal*, the outlines of a deal in which increases in discretionary spending would be traded for entitlement cuts were sketched out by Bush administration officials last year, but it will be up to the Clinton administration to fill in the details. Of course, while President Bush sometimes wasted his energies on unproductive battles against congressional pork, President Clinton may face the opposite temptation. Giving in too often to the many claimants for federal largess would defeat our plan's central theme—the *strategic* use of pork.

Still, the president should ignore the advice of fiscal puritans who would completely exorcise pork from the body politic. Favoring legislators with small gifts for their districts in order to achieve great things for the nation is an act not of sin but of statesmanship. To be sure, determining how much pork is needed and to which members it should be distributed is difficult. Rather than asking elected officials to become selfless angels, however, we would ask of them only that they be smart politicians. We suspect Madison would agree that the latter request has a far better chance of being favorably received.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Shakespeare—"For all time"?

PAUL A. CANTOR

THE CONTENT of the curriculum tends to be the focus of contemporary debates on the humanities in college education, as if our only concern should be exactly which books are being taught on our campuses. Many people, for example, are understandably concerned about ensuring that Shakespeare remains in the college curriculum. But if the parents who clamor for the teaching of Shakespeare knew how his works are being taught these days, they might not be so eager to have their children study them. In fact, despite all the attacks from academic radicals on the so-called Great Books, Shakespeare courses continue to flourish on our campuses. For example, *Harvard Magazine* reports that "Shakespeare" was one of the most popular undergraduate courses at Harvard in the fall 1992 semester, second only to "Principles of Economics." As encouraging as this fact may seem, we must be awake to the possibility that radical professors of literature have found more subtle ways of attacking our cultural heritage than outright canon-bashing. Having learned to treat traditional authors in untraditional

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ways, they can still pursue their political agenda under the guise of teaching canonical works. The case of Shakespeare shows that the issue of the humanities in our colleges is more complicated than is often supposed, and that as several writers have begun to argue we must pay attention not just to *what* is being taught but also to *how* it is being taught.[1]

I should, however, make clear from the beginning that I do not believe that the new approaches to Shakespeare on our college campuses are all bad. Above all, I do not share the common complaint that contemporary criticism has gone wrong by introducing politics into discussions of Shakespeare. Indeed, as someone who is himself interested in political approaches to Shakespeare, in many ways I feel more comfortable with contemporary Shakespeare criticism than I did with the situation when I was in graduate school. My Ph.D. dissertation was a political analysis of Shakespeare's Roman plays, and when I wrote it in 1969-1970 it was greeted largely with bewilderment by my faculty advisors. Thus I would be the last to claim that nothing is to be learned from contemporary approaches to Shakespeare that stress the importance of politics in literature. Several of the most prominent Shakespeare critics today, such as Stephen Greenblatt, offer subtle and insightful commentary on his plays. Nevertheless, taken as a whole, current approaches to Shakespeare raise disturbing questions, especially about their one-sidedness and dogmatism. There is a difference between *political* approaches to literature and *politicized* approaches, that is, between those that rightly take into account the centrality of political concerns in many literary classics and those that willfully seek to reinterpret and virtually recreate classic works in light of contemporary political agendas. Unfortunately, in their effort to use Shakespeare to strike a blow for multiculturalism and other radical goals, today's literature professors tend to be reductive and iconoclastic, presenting a diminished Shakespeare, one who is, I believe, much less interesting than he ought to be to our students. In particular, contemporary critics work to undermine the older

[1]I make this argument in the context of discussing the value of Third World literature in my essay "The Fixed Canon: The Maginot Line of the College Curriculum," *The American Enterprise*, Vol. 2, No. 5 (September/October 1991), pp. 14-20. See also David P. Bryden, "It Ain't What They Teach, It's the Way That They Teach It," *The Public Interest*, No. 103 (Spring 1991), pp. 38-53.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

view that Shakespeare's plays are somehow of universal significance, a claim most eloquently embodied in a line from the eulogy by Ben Jonson prefaced to the *First Folio*: "He was not of an age, but for all time!"

New Historicism

In a brief essay, I cannot hope to survey all developments in contemporary American Shakespeare criticism, and thus I will concentrate on the movement that has come to dominate the field at the moment, the so-called New Historicism (along with a closely allied movement in Great Britain, known as Cultural Materialism). To see the dominance of this movement, one need only look at which scholars have become the famous names in Shakespeare studies, at which books and articles are now routinely published in the field, and finally at how Shakespeare is taught throughout the country, at both research universities and liberal arts colleges. The term New Historicism was coined by Greenblatt and has been associated with him and a group of his colleagues at Berkeley, but the movement has by now spread throughout Shakespeare studies, Renaissance studies, and indeed literary studies in general. The New Historicism has a complicated intellectual genealogy, but its principal source is the French poststructuralist Michel Foucault; one might usefully describe the movement as a kind of deconstructed Marxism. Indeed the success of the New Historicism may in part be traced to the fact that it has become a kind of umbrella movement. Though broadly Marxist in its orientation, it has embraced the interpretive strategies of deconstruction, while at the same time pursuing the agenda of feminism and other forms of special-interest criticism. Deconstruction taught critics to look not only for what is expressed in a text but for what is hidden or suppressed as well. The New Historicism makes a political issue of such acts of suppression, always looking for the way minority positions have been silenced in literature. But to comprehend this approach fully, we must look more carefully at its intellectual heritage.

To understand the New Historicism, we must then begin from the fact that it is a species of historicism, a doctrine developed in the nineteenth century, largely as a result of the thinking of Hegel. Historicism is the view that all thought is historically determined—not just historically *conditioned*, as no rational per-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

son would deny, but historically *determined*, a much more specific and hence questionable claim. For historicists, all human beings are creatures of their historical moment, bound by the horizons of their age. Anyone living in the Middle Ages must necessarily think in a distinctively medieval manner. In Marxist varieties of historicism, all thought is said to be determined specifically by economic forces. Marxists speak of feudal modes of thought, capitalist modes of thought, and so on. It is important to realize that the New Historicists are by no means the first to study Shakespeare in terms of economics and politics. There is, for example, a long tradition of Marxist interpretations of Shakespeare, going back at least to the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 1930s.

More generally, much of traditional Shakespeare scholarship has been, broadly speaking, historicist in orientation. E. M. W. Tillyard's famous notion of the Elizabethan World Picture, drilled into several generations of American undergraduates, is a good example. Many traditional scholars have insisted that to understand Shakespeare's works, we have to look at the ideas of his contemporaries, preferably the most common ideas and hence the ideas of the common people of his day, a goal which has sent armies of scholars off to pore over Elizabethan diaries, letters, sermons, graffiti, and other manifestations of popular consciousness. Thus we cannot single out the New Historicists for historicizing Shakespeare. Long before Stephen Greenblatt, we can observe reductive tendencies in Shakespeare scholarship. By their very nature, all forms of historicism work to assimilate Shakespeare back into what is viewed as his historical milieu.

I have always seen something paradoxically self-defeating in this approach. We turn to Shakespeare precisely because he seems to tower above his contemporaries. But then Shakespeare scholars come along and tell us that his ideas were no different from those of his contemporaries. He may have written somewhat better than they, but in his thought he was indistinguishable from the Elizabethan man in the street.

In my view, then, the old historicism was bad enough. But what is new about the New Historicism? The old historicism took a rather benign view of Shakespeare's being bound by the horizons of the Elizabethan Age. Traditional Shakespeare critics seemed to have a simple scholarly interest in how the ideas of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Shakespeare and his contemporaries differed from those of our day. With all the talk of bodily humours, music of the spheres, and vegetative souls, a quaint aura pervades the writings of the old historicists. The Elizabethans believed that monarchy is the best form of government; we believe that democracy is. For the old historicists that is just the way things are—different ages think in different ways. Traditional Shakespeare scholars did not appear to be pushing any kind of agenda and, in particular, they did not seem obsessed with asserting their superiority as people of the twentieth century over Shakespeare, the Elizabethan. If anything, one can detect a faint, and sometimes not-so-faint, nostalgia in the old historicism. These scholars often betray a longing for a time when the world view was simpler, an age of faith, less riddled by doubt than our modern times. In short, the old historicism tried to uncover the distinctively Elizabethan ideas in Shakespeare, but it did not subject them to an inquisition.

Race, class, and gender

The New Historicists inject a new passion into discussions of the historical limitations of Shakespeare's thought by examining them in the context of today's political issues. They are interested in the ways that Shakespeare's plays reflect the race, class, and gender prejudices of his day. In this way, the study of Shakespeare becomes a branch of the broader movement in the contemporary academy that is often referred to by its critics as "Oppression Studies." For the New Historicists, Shakespeare becomes a powerful symbol of all that is wrong with our culture. Here we begin to see both the similarities and the differences between the New Historicism and traditional Marxism. Like old-style Marxists, the New Historicists talk of exploitation and oppression. But they tend to focus on different modes of exploitation and oppression. Traditional Marxism centered on economic analysis, and viewed the exploitation of workers as the main defect of modern society. Orthodox Marxists claimed that capitalism impoverishes the working class, and that only socialism can improve its lot. The difficulty for Marxism is that its thesis did not appear to be borne out by economic facts. Over time capitalism appears to improve the living standards of workers; socialism, by contrast, has typically proved disastrous. In light of recent events in the communist world, these economic facts are

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

painfully evident to would-be Marxists now, but even earlier in the century, it began to become clear that Marx's predictions about capitalism just were not coming true. As a result, as early as the 1920s and 1930s, in thinkers such as Lukács, Gramsci, and Adorno, one can begin to observe a shift in Marxist analysis, away from a narrowly economic critique of capitalism to a broadly cultural one, in the hopes of finding a more solid basis for repudiating capitalism, or at least one less demonstrably refutable.

These developments were carried on by various forms of the New Left in the 1960s and 1970s, and provide the basis for the New Historicism today. No longer feeling confident about economic arguments, the left has had to define new forms of exploitation. It is a curious fact that people who call themselves Marxists today rarely speak about the exploitation of workers, a phrase that once was the rallying cry of the left but now has a faintly archaic ring to it. Instead, today we hear constantly about the exploitation of minorities, women, and the environment. This shift in left-wing rhetoric is particularly evident among the New Historicists. They are loyal enough to Marxism to continue to invoke economic class as a category, but in general they have broadened the basis of their critique of capitalist existence, focusing on cultural issues, especially on the politics of group or ethnic identity. Cultural oppression is a much vaguer and less quantifiable concept than economic exploitation; hence the new forms of Marxism are less susceptible than the old to being judged by the standard of reality.

Culture and power

This change in approach has additional advantages for literary critics. In traditional Marxism, literature is viewed as part of the ideological superstructure of society, and hence as not all that important. Economics forms the base in classical Marxist analysis; culture is ultimately a mere epiphenomenon. In this view of the world, economists become all-important, and literary critics are of course marginal. In the New Historicism, would-be Marxist literary critics have found a way of moving themselves front-and-center in the enterprise of social criticism. They reject what they call the simplistic Marxist model of base and superstructure. Instead they view society as an all-embracing web or net-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

work of power relations, in which domination can be exercised from any point, perhaps all the more effectively when not coming from a well-defined and obvious center of power, but rather radiating out of a cultural site from which no one would expect to be dominated, such as the theatre. Drawing upon the ideas of thinkers like Gramsci and Althusser—above all the concept of hegemony, the idea that culture is the locus of power in any regime—professors of English are now able to claim that analyzing literature can take us to the heart of political and economic problems. If Shakespeare can be shown to be part of the oppressive regime in the West, then a critical blow against his works takes on vastly increased importance and the literary critic can not only justify his role in society, but can even make a claim to centrality.

Thus we now see literary critics arguing that, like all products of the Elizabethan Age, Shakespeare's plays are racist and sexist, and they also reflect a set of socioeconomic prejudices, though critics vary as to which ones. Some see Shakespeare catering to his court patrons and thus embodying and appealing to aristocratic prejudices. Others see him in the grip of the nascent capitalist forces in the Renaissance and hence appealing to the prejudices of the new middle-class mercantile segment of his audience. In any case, defining the historically limited horizons of Shakespeare's thought ceases to be a purely antiquarian enterprise for the New Historicists and instead becomes part of a broader cultural critique. They view Shakespeare as a defining, perhaps even a founding figure of our culture; indeed they discover the seeds of modernity in the Renaissance. Thus criticizing Shakespeare becomes a way of radically criticizing our culture. This is the chief goal of many contemporary thinkers, who believe that Western culture is fundamentally flawed by its racism and sexism, as well as its commitment to capitalism and middle-class values. The New Historicists are able to find all these prejudices embodied in Shakespeare's plays. For them it is no accident that the central figure of our literary tradition reflects the central biases of our culture, perhaps even working to perpetuate them. To uncover the biases in Shakespeare thus becomes a way of uncovering the narrow-mindedness and exclusivity of Western culture, and thus in turn a way of pursuing the agenda of many members of the contemporary academy—pro-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

moting multiculturalism and various forms of liberation, including liberation from Western ideas, which are viewed as mere prejudices. The New Historicism has carved out an intellectual niche for itself by elaborate theoretical disagreements with earlier forms of historicism and Marxism, but its success in the academy has been largely due to something much more basic: its ability to tap into the driving forces of current political movements on our campuses—above all, the obsession with identity politics.

The Tempest in the academy

As a concrete example of the New Historicism, I offer the treatment of *The Tempest* today. It is indeed a sign of the times that this play has risen to such prominence in contemporary Shakespeare studies. Long languishing in relative neglect in the academy, *The Tempest* has recently become one of the most commonly taught of Shakespeare's plays, especially in general survey courses. A professor teaching only one Shakespeare play nowadays is as likely to choose *The Tempest* as *Hamlet* or *King Lear*. I have no objection to this development; in fact I regard *The Tempest* as one of Shakespeare's greatest works, perhaps even the highest or at least the most mature fruit of his wisdom. Moreover, I believe that *The Tempest* needs to be analyzed in political terms. In my view, the play grows out of Plato's *Republic* and constitutes a profound meditation on the issue of the philosopher-king, raising *the* fundamental question of classical political thought, namely the rule of the wise.[2] But this is not how the New Historicists approach *The Tempest*. They do not see the play as raising basic questions but rather as reflecting basic prejudices. They claim, for example, that the play is captive to Elizabethan sexual ideology and, more generally, to the so-called patriarchal myths that infect all of Western culture. In its celebration of female chastity and wedded love, the play is said to support the bourgeois institution of the family and the limitations it places on women, stereotyping them as inferior to

[2]I have developed my view of *The Tempest* in two essays: "Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: The Wise Man as Hero," *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Spring, 1980), pp. 64-75, and "Prospero's Republic: The Politics of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*," in *Shakespeare as Political Thinker*, eds. John Alvis and Thomas G. West (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 1981), pp. 239-55.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

men. The play is also said to reflect class prejudices in its picture of lower-class figures like Stephano and Trinculo. By portraying the stupidity and futility of their attempted rebellion against their aristocratic betters, the play is said to support the Elizabethan status quo. As Paul Brown writes (in an essay in Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield's *Political Shakespeare: New essays in cultural materialism)*, in the kind of turgid prose that unfortunately has become characteristic of today's Shakespeare criticism:

> This division of masterless behaviour serves a complex hegemonic function: the unselfmastered aristocrats are reabsorbed, after correction, into the governing class, their new solidarity underscored by their collective laughter at the chastened revolting plebeians. The class joke acts as a recuperative and defusive strategy which celebrates the renewal of courtly hegemony and displaces its breakdown on to the ludicrous revolt of the masterless.

Today's critics find sexism and classism in all of Shakespeare's plays; what draws their attention to *The Tempest* in particular is the racism they find in the play and above all the fact that it can be viewed as complicit in the evils of European colonialism. The distinctive thrust of the recent critical fascination with *The Tempest* is to be found in the New Historicists' obsession with Caliban, the deformed, nearly subhuman creature Prospero finds on the island to which he is exiled. By now Caliban has virtually been turned into the hero of the play, a kind of standard bearer for Oppression Studies everywhere. In particular, in the New Historicism Caliban is taken as a prototype of the oppressed colonial. One of the most frequent and bitter charges these days against Western civilization is that it is imperialistic, and Prospero is now being analyzed as the archetype of the Western conquistador. He has taken the island away from its supposedly rightful native ruler, Caliban, and enslaved him in the process, forcing him to do the daily chores around the Prospero household. To contemporary critics all the fundamental injustices of imperialism are thus evident in *The Tempest*. Once again, I want to point out that, unlike many of my more traditional colleagues, I have no objection to reading Shakespeare in light of the issue of imperialism. In fact, I did just that back in 1976 in my book, *Shakespeare's Rome: Republic and Empire*, in which I analyze Shakespeare's portrayal of how an imperialistic policy eventually

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

undermines a political community. But I present Shakespeare as a conscious critic of imperialism, one who was acutely aware of its negative aspects. What I object to in the New Historicist interpretations of *The Tempest* is their general unwillingness to acknowledge that Shakespeare himself may have had some genuine insights into what is, after all, the extremely complex issue of imperialism, an issue not reducible to simple anti-Western slogans. (To their credit, some New Historicists acknowledge that *The Tempest* may reflect Shakespeare's own doubts about colonialism.)

In particular, today's critics tend to ignore the ways in which Shakespeare actively makes the case for Prospero's rule over Caliban as the rule of the wise man over the fool. To be sure, the New Historicists would refuse to accept this formulation of the problem because they would see it as a way of begging the question. One of their principal charges is that it is precisely Shakespeare's portrait of Prospero and Caliban that is at fault, for it is itself taken as reflecting his prejudices, and that means his racial biases, the biases of the European against the non-European. They charge that the whole problem in *The Tempest* is that the European is taken as the standard of civilization and the non-European is viewed as barbaric. Thus these critics see Caliban as an important literary archetype, a prefiguration of the way the American Indian was to be portrayed in our literature or the African in much European imperialist fiction. Correspondingly, Thomas Cartelli (in an essay in Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O'Connor's *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology*) sees Prospero as a prototype for one of the most sinister figures in the literature of imperialism, the central character in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, as well as for some of the most famous figures in the actual history of imperialism:

> What Prospero contributes to the possibilities of a Kurtz (... or a Rhodes or Stanley, for that matter) is a culturally privileged rationale for objectifying what are really always subjective representations of the Other, for presenting as facts what are really only fictions.... *The Tempest* supplies a pedigreed precedent for a politics of imperial domination premised on the objectified intractability of the native element. It provides a pretext for a paternalistic approach to colonial administration that sanctions a variety of enlightened procedures, ranging from the soft word to the closed fist.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Here Cartelli invokes one of the most influential notions in contemporary criticism, Edward Said's concept of orientalism, the idea that the West is constantly involved in artificially defining itself against the East, or any imaginary Other. The European is said to feed his sense of superiority by contrasting himself with some fictional, debased form of humanity in the person of the non-European. This is the deepest way in which *The Tempest* may be seen as complicit in the European imperialist enterprise. As Francis Barker and Peter Hulme put it (in an essay in John Drakakis' *Alternative Shakespeare*), in prose that seems to have been written, not just by two men, but by a whole committee:

> Through its very occlusion of Caliban's version of proper beginnings, Prospero's disavowal is itself performative of the discourse of colonialism, since this particular reticulation of denial of dispossession with retrospective justification for it, is the characteristic trope by which European colonial regimes articulated their authority over land to which they could have no conceivable legitimate claim.

Shakespeare as ideologue

I wish I had the space to give a fuller account of New Historicist approaches to *The Tempest*, as well as to offer a detailed refutation of them. Here I can only use *The Tempest* as an example of how Shakespeare is now routinely treated in the academy. And I want to repeat that I see much of interest in this approach. What I am troubled by is the fact that critics are now using Shakespeare to pursue a relentlessly anti-Western agenda, as if the mere presence of a genius like Shakespeare in the Western tradition were not in itself at least a minor point in its favor. But of course the effect of contemporary treatments of Shakespeare is to reduce his stature in the eyes of students (while conveniently raising the stature of the contemporary Shakespeare critic). Safely entrenched in their politically correct attitudes, students are made to feel superior to Shakespeare, to look down patronizingly at his supposedly limited and biased view of the world. This development would not be so disturbing if it were merely a matter of one author's reputation, but I view it as a sad case of a lost opportunity. Instead of being obsessed with Shakespeare's prejudices (which no doubt are in some ways

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

evident in his plays), students could find the reading of Shakespeare a way to break out of their own prejudices, which common sense suggests are at least equally ingrained. Shakespeare could be providing an opportunity for students to be confronted with a genuinely distinct understanding of the world, one that challenges the easy assumptions of today about what is just and unjust. When read properly, for example, *The Tempest* forces us to ask the question Socrates posed so powerfully (and so subversively): Why do those who truly know how to rule correctly not have, by nature, the right to rule over the unwise? This view is foreign to us in the twentieth century, with our democratic prejudices, but perhaps that is precisely why Shakespeare can be valuable to us, as a representative of older, aristocratic modes of thought at their best.

Contemporary critics treat *The Tempest* as an example of ideology, claiming that Shakespeare tries to present as the order of nature what were in fact merely the conventional opinions of his day. Thus Terry Eagleton in his *William Shakespeare* argues that the ending of *The Tempest* involves a deliberate act of mystification:

> What it fails to draw attention to is the glaring contradiction on which its whole discourse effectively founders: the fact that this 'organic' restoration of a traditional social order founded upon Nature and the body rests not only on a flagrant mystification of Nature, gratuitous magical device and oppressive patriarchalism, but is actually set in the context of the very colonialism which signals the imminent victory of the exploitative, 'inorganic' mercantile bourgeoise. Unable to tidy up this minor discrepancy, Shakespeare returns to the natural environment of Warwickshire with a considerable amount of money. In this, at least, he had the best of both worlds.

Here we see the sheer vulgarity of contemporary approaches to Shakespeare, the snide and supercilious attempt to reduce his achievement in our eyes by imputing the basest of material motives to his artistic career. But when viewed without these Marxist prejudices in mind, *The Tempest* in fact demonstrates Shakespeare's profound awareness of the distinction between the natural and the conventional, and his attempt to discriminate the two elements in human life, especially in the political sphere. In the opening scene of the play, we see a ship threatened with

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

destruction in the midst of a storm at sea. Shakespeare shows two groups of characters: the aristocratic rulers of Italy, who are frightened out of their wits and hence incapable of dealing with the crisis, contrasted with the workmanlike mariners, who, given their knowledge of the sea, are doing their best to save themselves and their socially superior passengers. When one of the aristocrats tries to assert his conventional authority over the mariners, one of them silences him with the observation: "What cares these roarers for the name of king?" Far from being a dupe of the aristocracy, Shakespeare is perfectly capable of documenting its limitations, even in comparison to mere working men. As Shakespeare had shown so profoundly in *King Lear*, he was acutely aware of the fact that the order of nature does not always lend its support to the conventional order of political authority. In its clear sense that the ordinary laborers of the sea—provided that they have the correct knowledge of the mariner's art—have more to say in a real crisis than their supposed betters in the aristocracy, the opening scene of *The Tempest* flies in the face of all the New Historicist assumptions about Shakespeare's prejudices and limited horizons. Shakespeare makes fun of Stephano and Trinculo, not because they are lower class by social convention, but because they are stupid by nature. As a whole, *The Tempest* shows that the natural distinction between the wise and the foolish cuts across the conventional distinction between the high and the low in social status. On the issue of nature versus convention, Shakespeare had more in common with Socrates and Plato than he did with the average Elizabethan.

The future of Shakespeare studies

I have tried to give some sense of what is going on in the academic treatment of Shakespeare today, but I have inevitably oversimplified the work of the New Historicists, who are often sophisticated thinkers, presenting their arguments in complex ways. For example, I have stressed the way the New Historicists portray Shakespeare as simply embodying the prejudices of his day. But many of the New Historicists depart from traditional Marxism on just this point, refusing to accept a mechanical correlation between class origins and class consciousness. Some New Historicists are willing to acknowledge a subversive strain in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Shakespeare, usually because they see him reproducing the reality of his age so accurately that he unconsciously portrays its ideological fissures or contradictions, thus enabling contemporary critics to articulate them from their superior vantage point in the twentieth century. The position of the New Historicists on the issue of orthodoxy and subversion in Shakespeare can thus become very complicated. But suffice it to say here that, given the origin of their views in the thought of Foucault, who believed that any attack on a system must ultimately be construed as a move within that system, in the end the New Historicists believe that even if Shakespeare's plays may be said to raise doubts about conventional Elizabethan dogmas, they actually served the purposes of the ruling authorities, who in effect used the theatre to let their subjects blow off ideological steam and in the process become more docile. This position is very convenient for the New Historicists because it makes it possible to reinterpret any attempt to show unconventional elements in Shakespeare's thinking as just more evidence for his deeper role in maintaining Elizabethan orthodoxy.

This is one reason why the New Historicism has become difficult to challenge in the academy today and why it is now fast assuming the position of an intellectual orthodoxy itself. If I seem to be portraying a bleak situation in my account of Shakespeare in our universities, that is my intention. I believe that our teachers—and hence our students—are in danger of losing sight of what truly makes Shakespeare unique and our most valuable cultural asset: his ability to test the ideals of his day against the ideals of other eras, an effort which underlies the extraordinary geographical and historical range of subject matter in his plays and which provides us with an opportunity to test our own ideals against the ones he portrays so powerfully. For all its theoretical sophistication and occasional local insights, the New Historicism is working to obfuscate our larger view of Shakespeare and narrow our appreciation of the scope of his achievement. In criticizing this movement, I want to stress that I am not speaking as a representative of the traditional mainstream of Shakespeare criticism. If anything, I have tried to suggest the continuity of the New Historicism with the old, to show how traditional scholars made the same error of assimilating Shakespeare to his contemporaries. In short, I object to the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New Historicism not because it is new but because it is historicism.

Similarly I am not one of those who yearns to go back to the good old days of the so-called New Critical interpretations of Shakespeare, when all the emphasis was on formal questions, patterns of imagery and symbolism, and no one dared to speak of the political dimension of Shakespeare's plays. If the New Historicism has accomplished anything, it has done so by calling attention to the centrality of political questions in the proper interpretation of his plays. What is wrong with the New Historicism is that it pursues its political analysis of Shakespeare within the context of a narrow political agenda, largely determined by specific contemporary concerns. What we need to do is to combine the older sense of Shakespeare's universality with the new interest in the political dimension of his plays. For ultimately it is in the wide range of his political vision that Shakespeare's universal importance is to be found, and hence his relevance to our contemporary situation. But we should not be using our supposed contemporary wisdom to question Shakespeare; rather we should interrogate our own idols in light of the wisdom embodied in his plays.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Social science and minority "set-asides"

GEORGE R. LANOUE

FOR THE PAST half century, government agencies and the courts have relied on social scientists to define and measure discrimination. The most famous result was the Supreme Court decision in *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, which cited the work of Kenneth Clark, Gunnar Myrdal, and other social scientists to prove that segregation harmed black children. In countless decisions and reports since, social-science research has been used to attack racial classifications and stereotypes.

Now, in an ironic reversal, the social sciences are being massively employed to *protect* racial classifications. In the eighteen-month period between January 1991 and June 1992, state and local governments spent more than $13 million on what have become known as "disparity studies." The federal government's Urban Mass Transit Authority spent an additional $14 million.

The disparity study is the strange fruit of the most significant civil-rights decision of the 1980s, *City of Richmond* v. *Croson*.

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of John Sullivan.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In 1983, Richmond began to "set aside" 30 percent of its contracts for minority business enterprises (MBEs). Six months later, the J. A. Croson Company was the low bidder on a project to install urinals in the city jail, but was denied a contract because of the set-aside provision. Croson filed suit. After the case bounced around various courts for six years, the Supreme Court ruled 6-3 that the set-aside requirement violated Croson's 14th Amendment right to equal protection. The Court further declared all use of racial classifications by state and local governments to be subject to "strict scrutiny." This meant that the kind of racial categories common in affirmative-action programs could only be used to remedy identified discrimination, and then only if the measures were narrowly tailored and employed only after race-neutral remedies had failed. Justice Marshall complained that the decision was a judicial strait-jacket. Justice O'Connor, however, writing for the plurality, noted that Richmond had offered "no evidence that qualified minority contractors have been passed over for City contracts or subcontracts, either as a group or in any individual case." Nor did Richmond present any evidence about how many MBEs were in the relevant market and how many city dollars they had received. Finally, there was no evidence of discrimination against the various minority groups Richmond had included in its program; for that matter, there was no evidence that Richmond even had any citizens belonging to certain of those groups—Eskimos and Aleuts, for instance.

"Proper findings," O'Connor declared, "are necessary to define both the scope of the injury and the extent of the remedy necessary to cure its effects." Without such findings, she noted, MBE programs might be motivated by simple "racial politics." She then invited jurisdictions to conduct a statistical comparison to see if there was a disparity between the number of qualified, willing, and able MBEs and their utilization in a locality's contracts. If a significant disparity existed, then "an inference of discriminatory exclusion could arise."

Croson stands as a challenge to the use of racial classifications in any government program. It has been used to strike down a proposal for all-black-male schools in Detroit and black-only university scholarships in Maryland. But obviously, its greatest threat is to the future of MBE programs using racial classifications.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

MBE program characteristics

By 1989, there were 234 minority set-aside programs in states, counties, cities, and special districts across the country. Generally they covered businesses owned by members of the traditional affirmative-action groups (blacks, Hispanics, Asian Americans, Native Americans, Eskimos, Aleuts, and women), but occasionally, as was the case in Atlanta, Georgia, and Dade County, Florida, only blacks were eligible. The programs employed a variety of devices to increase the number of contracts for MBEs and for women business enterprises (WBEs). Some jurisdictions, such as Washington, D.C., had a statutory set-aside, in this case 35 percent. Others, including Hillsborough County, Florida, determined the maximum number of subcontracts that could be created in a particular project and established a goal that as a practical matter required all of the subcontracts to be filled by MBEs or WBEs, if they were available. Still other jurisdictions, such as San Francisco, created bidding preferences for M/WBEs on primary contracts along with goals for subcontracts. Dade County used set-asides, goals, and what it called affirmative-action efforts that required contractors (mostly non-local) to make contributions to black civic and charitable organizations. In addition, a number of federal agencies—including the Federal Aviation Administration, the Urban Mass Transit Administration, the Federal Highway Administration, the Department of Energy, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development—established programs requiring state and local governments to implement M/WBE goals or set-asides as a condition for receiving federal funds.

Many local programs were imitations of federal initiatives, and included the same groups and used the same preferential devices. Other programs were established in response to local concerns about employment and economic development in minority neighborhoods. In Dade County, for example, a program giving preference to black-owned businesses was part of a package following the 1980 Miami riots. Elsewhere, as with the construction of the Philadelphia Convention Center and the expansion of the Atlanta rapid-transit system, an MBE program was necessary to build the political coalition needed to support public funding. Other programs, such as San Francisco's, were attempts by new political coalitions to permanently reallocate pub-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lic contracts away from established white-owned companies. These programs were often nothing more than a new form of racial and ethnic patronage. Some programs, finally, were created in response to actual allegations of discrimination, but the charges were remarkably general. No jurisdiction has ever been found guilty of the kind of racial discrimination in public contracting that was once commonplace in employment, housing, education, and voting.

In fact, it was the widespread requirement that public contracts be awarded to the low bidder, a legacy of the Progressive era, that made discrimination in this area difficult to practice. In other areas where racial classifications have been used for remedial purposes, discriminatory practices were at one time relatively overt. In public contracting, however, the standard low-bid process was designed to protect against discrimination or favoritism of any kind. Of course no system is perfect; discrimination could exist within government in the creation of or communication about contract opportunities. But government controls these procedures and could cure these problems without using racial preferences. Outside government, the borrowing, bonding, or licensing processes could also be biased, but governments can remedy discrimination in these areas through direct regulation. Discrimination could also exist in the relationships between primary and secondary contractors, but few jurisdictions have made such discrimination illegal, or established any procedures for monitoring it or for settling conflicts when they occur.

The disparity-studies gambit

MBE programs have traditionally provided jurisdictions with a mechanism for economic redistribution that did not require them to accuse anyone of discrimination. *Croson* made this game more complex, since the decision appeared to bar race-conscious remedies unless discrimination was identified. All over the country, jurisdictions began hiring consultants to "prove" the existence of contracting discrimination. But they needed to find this "proof" without actually pointing at any current official or company, since that would raise the issue of sanctions against the discriminator and could lead to a rebuttal. Nor could a jurisdiction's consultant specify the nature of the discrimination

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in such a way as to suggest that the existing MBE program was not the right solution.

Since no one had any experience at this task, a wide variety of candidates entered the new market. Some national consulting firms, such as KPMG Peat Marwick, won contracts, while others went to organizations formed specifically for this purpose. Some firms approached the task with a semblance of ideological neutrality, while others, such as the Minority Business Enterprise Legal Defense and Education Fund, had a clear-cut position. But regardless of outward appearances, it was obvious that if a company wished to make a regular business of disparity studies, it could not produce conclusions that would invalidate major parts of existing programs. In this area, you were only as good as the political reception given your last study.

While lawyers, accountants, and others worked on the studies, most of the participants and most of the methods were drawn from the social sciences. Generally this work has not drawn social scientists of particular renown, but such notables as Andrew Brimmer, a professor of economics at the University of Massachusetts and the first black member of the Federal Reserve Board, and Ray Marshall, a professor of public policy at the LBJ School and former secretary of labor in the Carter Administration, teamed up to do Atlanta's disparity study.

The studies vary substantially in length and expense. The Atlanta study is 1,034 pages long and cost $532,000, while San Francisco's disparity study is only fifty-five pages long and cost $50,000. The studies are also very diverse methodologically. Overall, however, they have used three approaches—historical, anecdotal, and statistical.

Historical approaches

Understanding discrimination in any field requires an examination of the historical context. But where does one begin, and what evidence is relevant? The 1984 San Francisco M/WBE statute was based on a legislative finding of "historic discrimination against minorities and women, often officially sanctioned and enforced by government from the inception of our Republic to the present." This discrimination was said to be responsible for the "centuries of limited access to the marketplace these groups have suffered." Three years later, the Court of Appeals for the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Ninth Circuit dismissed these sweeping historical claims and ruled that since the city had not found any of its agencies or officials to have discriminated against anyone, the use of racial preferences, supposedly as remedies, was unconstitutional.

In fact, evidence of overt government discrimination during the past two decades is very rare. But *Croson* permits race-conscious remedies if a city is even a *passive* participant in discrimination in the construction industry. Justice O'Connor stated that if a system of racial exclusion was maintained by members of the local construction industry, "we think it clear the city could take affirmative action to dismantle such a system." Evidence of such discrimination, however, has been hard to find. While it surely occurs from time to time, white primary contractors who refuse low bids from qualified MBE subcontractors soon discover that their competitors are able to underbid them. Practicing such bias is very expensive in the rough and tumble world of construction. Some disparity studies, however, have attempted to make a case for contracting preferences because of discrimination in other areas, such as housing, education, and voting. That kind of discrimination was manifest in Richmond, but the Supreme Court declared in *Croson* that past societal discrimination could not justify the use of racial classifications in public contracting.

Seattle's disparity study takes a somewhat different approach. It points out that many construction businesses were built after the owner gained practical experience in the trades. Since employment discrimination in the construction industry, particularly against blacks, has been well documented, this might seem to justify racial set-asides. Most major cities, however, have required some form of "Philadelphia Plan" proportional representation in construction employment since the early 1970s. Furthermore, there is no way to quantify the number of M/WBEs that would exist today "but for" discrimination at some time in the past. As the *Croson* plurality noted, "It is sheer speculation how many minority firms there would be in Richmond absent past societal discrimination, just as it was sheer speculation how many minority medical students would have been admitted to the medical school at Davis absent past discrimination in educational opportunities."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The historical approaches to proving discrimination suffer from a number of additional defects. First, they almost always ignore the impact of immigration on who owns contemporary businesses. In San Francisco, for example, the population of Asians and blacks grew from 4 percent of the total in 1940 to 39 percent in 1990. Naturally, when these groups arrived, they did not find a blank economic slate. The median age of the twenty-five largest construction firms in San Francisco is thirty-five years. None is minority-owned and all were founded before substantial minority populations existed in the city. The oldest San Francisco construction firm, the Bechtel Corporation, was founded in 1898 and is larger than all of the local M/WBE construction companies combined.

Second, since disparity studies are intended to justify the configurations of current M/WBE programs, they do not objectively examine the strengths and weaknesses of the local historical record as they find it. They focus almost all of their attention on discrimination against blacks, where some information usually exists, and then make generalizations about discrimination against other minorities and women, for which there is little or no record. The Seattle study said flatly that creating a specific record for each group was unnecessary, since "research" showed that someone who discriminated against blacks was likely to discriminate against other minorities. It cited no source for that assertion and its own data indicated that blacks reported discrimination twice as often as Asians. None of the studies asked whether Jews or other groups not in current MBE programs might have been harmed by business discrimination.

Anecdotal approaches

If properly gathered and analyzed, anecdotal information about discrimination in public contracting might be valuable, as it has been in other areas where bias has affected decisions. But the data gathered have been seriously skewed.

A common technique has been to use hearings, carefully orchestrated by the bureaucracies operating MBE programs, to collect testimony from MBE owners about discrimination. In San Francisco, hearings went on for days as MBE spokespersons railed about the vicissitudes of doing business. In Baltimore, the chairwoman of the hearings, like some summertime tent evange-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

list, urged witnesses to come forward and testify to discrimination so that a record could be established that would withstand a *Croson* test. But almost never did anyone in either city allege discrimination against any specific city agency or private business. Perhaps this was because the witnesses felt too intimidated to name names. Perhaps it was because in cities where the political consensus has produced an M/WBE program there is little, if any, overt contracting discrimination. Seattle took another tack. Within weeks of the *Croson* decision, the city attorney had twenty M/WBEs sign forms he had prepared that said, "I believe the refusal of prime contractors, developers and owners, etc. to award contracts or subcontracts to my business for private sector work is due to their racist attitude toward me and toward minority primes and minority persons generally."

Anecdotal data is typically used to make a case, rather than analyze a problem. Rarely is any attention paid to such social science fundamentals as sample construction, response rate, and the replication of results. In the $400,000 Dade County study, for example, both questionnaires and interviews were used to gather anecdotes to confirm discrimination in the local construction industry; but only 15 percent of the questionnaires were returned and only black businesses were interviewed. When a white-owned construction company sued the county over its MBE program (a case in which I served as an expert witness for the plaintiffs), it was disclosed at trial that the questionnaires had been destroyed and that assurances of confidentiality had been given those interviewed so that no third party could examine the unedited data. Andrew Brimmer, who conducted the Dade County study as well as the one in Atlanta, also had to concede that he did not have enough information about norms in the contracting industry to know whether anecdotes about slow payment, late notice of subcontracting opportunities, and other difficulties were evidence of racially disparate treatment or were common to all small businesses. Finally, he had to admit that he had no way of verifying whether any of the anecdotes were actually true.

Anecdotal data appear to be carefully selected to confirm the studies' arguments. In Milwaukee, for example, 68 percent of Hispanic contractors and 60 percent of women contractors surveyed did not claim that discrimination affected their businesses. But the study quoted only those owners who did allege discrimi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nation. Sometimes the authors of studies are forced to add considerable interpretation to obtain the desired conclusion. The Seattle study confessed that M/WBEs were "reluctant to reach general conclusions absent direct evidence of bias, which is seldom available." Consequently the study's authors decided that their own interpretation of events would be authoritative in deciding if an incident was discriminatory.

Anecdotal approaches are popular because their outcomes can be easily controlled. But they are not always very persuasive in the courtroom. In 1991, the Ninth Circuit remanded an MBE case from King County, Washington, back to the district court, with instructions to focus on statistics rather than the boilerplate affidavits Seattle officials had gathered.

Statistical approaches

Statistical proof of discrimination is complex. Reasonable people can disagree about the proper data and tests. Justice O'Connor's opinion in *Croson* focuses on the importance of finding a statistical disparity between the availability and the utilization of qualified minority contractors willing and able to perform a service. How should this availability be measured? At a minimum, the availability data should take into account the actual geographical area from which the jurisdiction's public contractors are drawn. The data should also be broken down by type of market, and by the various groups the M/WBE program covers. Discrimination against Asians in heavy construction, for example, does not prove that other minorities suffer discrimination in heavy construction. Nor does it prove that Asians suffer discrimination in other markets. Finally, the analysis should take into account *Croson*'s "willing and able" language by considering the capacity of firms to take on jobs of differing sizes. Large firms are better able to bid for large contracts. In the construction market, just 12 percent of the nation's firms have five or more employees, yet their work accounts for 78 percent of total revenues. Since M/WBEs are generally newer and smaller than non-M/WBEs, a failure to take the size of firms into account will exaggerate the availability of M/WBEs.

The task of making availability/utilization comparisons would be easier if there were public sources of data. But although the Census Bureau publishes comprehensive data on minority- and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

women-owned businesses every five years, it does not release comparable data on businesses owned by white males. Also, there is the problem of how to categorize large corporations with many stockholders. What is their ethnic or gender ownership?

For all these reasons, many disparity studies have conducted their own surveys of availability, but often this has led to distortions. In San Francisco, although half of the city's contracts go to non-city firms, the availability figures were based on city firms alone, thus exaggerating the percentage of M/WBEs available. This permitted the city to claim ongoing discrimination and led to the setting of unrealistically high utilization goals. The city also double-counted firms owned by non-white women, showing the same businesses available in both the MBE and WBE categories. In Seattle, the survey was based on a response rate of less than 20 percent of the M/WBEs and 2 percent of the non-M/WBEs, but when the study made generalizations it did not include any of the qualifications social scientists would ordinarily attach to so limited a sample.

The basic problem the disparity studies have had to confront, however, is that most M/WBE programs, by using set-asides or by forcing primary subcontractors to use M/WBE subcontractors, have created overutilization of these businesses. The statistical approach has often revealed this embarrassing fact. The studies have responded to this problem in some ingenious ways. In Denver, where the Department of Public Works had set MBE utilization goals at 25 percent, the disparity study found only 6 percent availability. The study's authors argued that "but for" discrimination, MBE availability would be the same as the minority proportion of construction employment in the Denver area—16 percent. That theory did not work well for women, however, who owned more construction firms (12 percent) than their proportion of the construction trade (3 percent), so the study switched gears and argued that 12 percent was the right goal for WBEs. In the Seattle area, where MBE goals had been set at 10 percent to 20.5 percent, the study's authors could only find 8.4 percent MBE availability. Undismayed, they claimed that since M/WBEs said they received relatively more of their revenues from public contracts, they should be considered 50 percent more available for public contracting than non-M/WBEs. The Seattle study also had no data on separate

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ethnic groups because the coalition of Puget Sound-area governments financing the study insisted that such information not be gathered. They feared it would show that Asian-American businesses were not underutilized and they were unwilling to take the political heat for excluding them from any future MBE program.

The San Francisco study entailed a separate analysis of fourteen markets and seven different groups for a total of ninety-eight comparisons. In twenty-six categories there were no M/WBEs, although these areas had previously been included in the city's ordinance. In the remaining seventy-two categories, forty-five showed statistically significant underutilization (given the assumptions of the study, which excluded non-city firms from availability and gave no consideration to capacity), nineteen indicated no underutilization, and eight had overutilization. The study is full of statistical anomalies. It showed only two law firms available for city work. It also showed that relative to their number of firms, Hispanics received twice as many construction dollars as Asians, though no one could imagine a theory based on discrimination in San Francisco that would explain that result. It also concluded that there was much more underutilization in primary contracts, where the city controlled every aspect of the process, than in subcontracting, which usually involved negotiations between large primary contractors and smaller M/WBE subcontractors.

Nevertheless, the city, which had an earlier MBE program declared unconstitutional by the Ninth Circuit, solemnly decided that any statistically significant underutilization could be caused only by discrimination. To remedy the "discrimination" where underutilization had occurred, local M/WBEs in those categories were given 10 percent bidding preferences on all city contracts. To make that effective the city also raised the threshold of its charter's low-bid requirement from $50,000 to $10,000,000, meaning that most contracts no longer had to go to the low bidder. These moves tripled the amount of city contracts awarded to M/WBEs in two years, and the new "narrowly tailored" program was able to fend off a preliminary injunction challenge. The M/WBE coalition was unhappy, however, since some of its member groups were left out—the disparity study did not show them as underutilized. Consequently, the city added amendment after

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

amendment to bring the excluded groups into the program. Indeed, at the insistence of the assistant city attorney who had earlier defended the trimmed-back M/WBE program in court, the city created a new 80 percent goal for legal services, to be divided equally among Asians, Latinos, blacks, and women. That goal, of course, has no relationship to any statistical availability of law firms in San Francisco or anywhere else.

Finally, when a disparity study is done well and includes appropriate data, it may simply be ignored. The Louisiana state study, prepared by a white economist and black political scientist, concluded that when capacity was taken into account, the state did not discriminate against MBEs. Although that might suggest there were not sufficient grounds for a race-conscious program, then-Governor Buddy Roemer reached the opposite conclusion and decided that the study proved the state's MBE program must be preserved.

The disparity-study shield

Whatever their flaws as social science, the disparity studies have proved a potent weapon in keeping alive racial classifications in public contracting. White contractors and the various branches of the Associated General Contractors have had a difficult time getting the lower courts to enforce *Croson*. Although one of the legacies of the civil-rights movement has been the use of class-action suits, which broadened concepts of standing to sue, contractors have discovered novel barriers to pursuing their class-action claims. The Fourth Circuit ruled that a contractors association that included MBEs lacked standing because it could not represent all of its members in an attack on racial contracting preferences. The Eleventh Circuit has limited standing to low-bid contractors denied a contract because of an MBE program. Even when a jurisdiction used set-asides that prevented all non-MBEs from bidding, standing was rejected. (That case, however, will be reviewed by the Supreme Court this term.) The Eleventh Circuit also decided that the additional costs non-MBEs incurred because of MBE program requirements were an economic injury common to all non-MBE contractors and therefore could not be challenged. Other circuits have used more traditional concepts of standing. Until the Supreme Court resolves

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

these questions, *Croson* cannot be effectively enforced in large parts of the country.

There are considerable risks for an individual contractor challenging an MBE program. The litigation will be long, costly, and of uncertain outcome. The lawsuit may be politically risky as well, since the charge of racism will often be made against the plaintiff. Further, suing a client is always uncomfortable, particularly when that client is the government, which controls so much of the environment in which contractors work. Contractors tell stories of being warned by politicians not to challenge MBE programs. None of the traditional public or private civil-rights agencies has shown any sympathy for the plight of white contractors no matter how legally or economically irrational an MBE program might be. Even when an unusually intrepid white contractor gains standing and works to create a serious lawsuit, jurisdictions have proven adept at protecting their overall program by granting waivers or settling out-of-court before a ruling is made on the constitutional merits. When, after three days of trial, the Dade County study was shown to have serious flaws, the county paid a $490,000 settlement to the plaintiffs so it could continue its program.

Above all, it is the disparity studies themselves that are proving to be the greatest impediment to implementing *Croson*. No matter how poorly done, a several-hundred-page disparity study "proving discrimination" will quiet critics in the political and business community just by its existence. Few will actually read it and fewer still will have the time or tools to analyze it. Once a study exists, the relatively expeditious and inexpensive trial tactic of seeking a preliminary injunction is usually eliminated. A case tried on the merits involving a disparity study will end up as a costly duel of experts, with the jurisdictions having an enormous advantage in intellectual and fiscal resources. If the contractor wins, the jurisdiction may commission a new disparity study and put a program back in place, until challenged again in court. *Croson* may thus end up like *Bakke*—a passionate but unenforcable judicial declaration against the overbroad use of racial classifications.

Only by requiring rigor in disparity studies can we ensure that the 14th Amendment right to equal protection is not buried under reams of paper. Given the economic incentives in this

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

market, greater rigor is unlikely unless federal courts establish the ground rules for what constitutes social science and what is pseudo-science. These guidelines must consider the measurement of availability and utilization, the significance of the fact that non-MBEs are generally older, larger, and more qualified to handle substantial construction projects, and the credibility of unverified anecdotal evidence.

The current crop of disparity studies is the first generation of what will surely be many *Croson*-required inquiries into discrimination in public contracting. If conducted objectively these studies will evolve, just as have studies of employment discrimination and environmental impact, into useful tools. Some disparity studies have been good faith, if not fully mature, efforts to grapple with complex issues. There are instances when MBE programs have been adjusted in light of disparity studies showing no underutilization in some areas. But most have sought only to justify the MBE program of their jurisdictional paymaster by scraping together and magnifying every piece of data pointing to discrimination, without applying any of the conventional social-science tests to determine validity.

The cost of exaggerating discrimination

More is at stake here than just the fair awarding of public contracts, important as that goal is. Flawed disparity studies have inflated and distorted the presence of discrimination; as a result, they may well worsen racial polarization. This ultimately harms persons from both majority and minority groups, and endangers the whole political community.

As our country becomes more racially and ethnically diverse, the task of defining discrimination will become more complex, and the need to attack bias vigorously will grow. Disparity studies, in their current form, serve this purpose poorly, undermining both good scholarship and good government.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Genetic engineering: The making of monsters?

BERNARD D. DAVIS

IN 1973 scientists integrated a number of esoteric techniques in microbial and molecular biology, making possible the directed molecular recombination of DNA. By this method, fragments of DNA from any source could be spliced in the test tube and cloned in host organisms. Scientists soon devised other ingenious techniques for manipulating DNA, including improved methods for isolating genes and determining their sequences. These developments have had a major impact on research in virtually every branch of the biomedical sciences. They have also created a burgeoning biotechnology industry that encompasses medicine, agriculture, and pollution control.

But despite the outstanding achievements and promise of this genetic revolution, the public has been ambivalent. People are eager for the benefits but fear the possible dangers. By now,

This article is based on a chapter in G. E. Gaull and R. A. Goldberg, eds., The New Global Food System *(John Wiley and Sons, forthcoming). I am grateful to Henry I. Miller for his helpful suggestions.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

after twenty years of expanding experience with biotechnology with no detectable harm to humans or to the environment, the anxiety has abated a good deal. Nevertheless, the development of safety regulations for bioengineering is still plagued by confusion, controversy, and continuing public apprehension. Why has there been such concern over essentially hypothetical dangers?

Setting the rules

As biotechnology began to take off in the early 1970s, molecular biologists themselves were deeply concerned over the potential dangers of their emerging field. Indeed, they contributed to public anxiety by publicizing their uncertainty very responsibly—and more openly than had been customary for the initial stages of a scientific controversy. One reason for this unusual candor was the overwhelming novelty and magnitude of these scientists' new powers. Many scientists no doubt also took pride in being responsive to student pressure for increased public participation in the control of technology. But these scientists overestimated their ability to identify the relevant risks of biotechnology, and they underestimated the apprehensive public response to their early and open discussion of potential problems.

Molecular biologists had pioneered their new field with great intelligence and experimental skill; they understandably viewed assessing the risks involved as a problem that they could and should solve in the same way. But risk assessment was more properly a problem for evolutionary biologists and epidemiologists than for molecular geneticists. The first two groups, unfortunately, were only sparsely represented at a major 1974 conference in Asilomar, California, which laid the groundwork for the initial regulations governing biotechnology. Moreover, in the early years of this new discipline virtually everyone assumed (erroneously, we now know) that the possible range of novel organisms was unlimited. Thus, few scientists felt confident in making predictions about such a radically new world.

Accordingly, excessive caution prevailed at the conference. In a tense and rushed atmosphere, some 200 scientists attempted to thrash out various complex issues in the presence of the press. This was quite a departure from scientific tradition, whereby a committee of experts first explores the problems created by new

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

discoveries and then presents its evaluations to the public. At Asilomar separate working groups offered different assessments of various risks; conference participants recommended that the "worst-case" scenarios become the foundation for new regulations governing biotechnology. These rules were then formulated and administered by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), guided by a Recombinant DNA Advisory Committee (RAC).

Second thoughts about risk

The conclusions reached at Asilomar skewed the debate from the start. Though the initial guidelines may have reassured the public, they were, in retrospect, excessively restrictive, treating even normal human DNA as dangerous. Moreover, the guidelines classified several levels of risk for different groups of organisms on a basis that appeared to be much more scientific than it really was. Within a few months scientists close to the problem realized that they had exaggerated the dangers. But it took a number of years for the RAC to relax its guidelines for those recombinants that were almost certainly harmless.

Although much initial concern focused on the *process* of DNA recombination, by now virtually all bioengineering experts agree that the evaluation of a novel organism should be based solely on its properties rather than on the technique used to create it. Moreover, the definitions were soon outgrown as researchers developed new techniques of inserting DNA into cells that do not involve recombination in the test tube, such as use of an electrical potential or bombardment with DNA-coated microscopic metal particles. Nevertheless, regulators and the public have not so readily abandoned the view that recombinant DNA presents a special, dangerous case. What accounts for this persistent dissonance?

I would first note a unique feature of this controversy: its prolonged focus on hypothetical risks, rather than on the more usual exaggeration of demonstrated ones. With newly recognized bona fide sources of harm, such as asbestos or radon, we ordinarily react slowly and then overreact after a lag. But with recombinant DNA we reacted explosively and we continue to debate the issues vigorously—even though the basis for predicting future harm from recombinants has become exceedingly tenuous

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

(with the exception of products of organisms that are themselves pathogens, that is, sources of disease).

Concern about genetic engineering has been further intensified by an underlying uneasiness over the future impact of gene therapy and genetic screening in human beings. Here, there are clearly serious concerns. These include the potential tendency of therapeutic purposes to blur into eugenic ones, the likelihood that knowledge of individual susceptibilities to future disease will often generate more anxiety than benefit, and the certainty that such knowledge will greatly increase problems of privacy. These concerns have been most influential in those countries where distortions of genetics contributed to the Holocaust: The Green political party has impeded progress in genetic engineering in Germany even more than anti-technology activist Jeremy Rifkin has been able to do in the United States. Concern for environmental deterioration has led to similar reactions in other countries, and in Switzerland it has driven out some biotechnology-based industries.

Still another, more general reason for uneasiness over genetic engineering has been an extrapolation from the model of the physical technologies. A few decades ago the advances in these technologies seemed to be providing us with a virtually free lunch; but disillusion set in as we encountered unanticipated costs to our environment and our security. As a result, some fear that manipulating the cell nucleus might, like manipulating the atomic nucleus, have unforeseeable costs.

Natural adaptation

The assumption behind these concerns is that we have no basis for estimating future dangers from biotechnology. In fact, we do have a basis for predicting the effects of biotechnology—our historical experience with domestication. Domestication began when our ancestors learned to tame certain animals, plants, and fermentation microbes to serve human needs, then discovered how to select empirically for varieties strengthened in certain valuable traits. The benefits have been strikingly free of social costs for thousands of years, in contrast to the more mixed bag yielded by the physical technologies.

Furthermore, the products of past domestication have not "taken over" via spontaneous spread, as is feared for the prod-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ucts of the new biotechnology. They have spread only to the extent that cultivation by humans has caused them to displace the earlier occupants of the same territory. Since the products of the new biotechnology are based on an extension and refinement of the same principles that govern domestication, they should be subject to the same limitations on their spread.

These limitations arise from the nature and scale of the evolutionary process. Evolution has been continuously experimenting with genetic novelties for three billion years. It has been extraordinarily effective in filling each ecological niche with organisms exquisitely adapted to that environment, from the Alaskan tundra to hot vents in the depths of the ocean. Moreover, in the microbial world the scale of natural adaptation is enormous: The average shovelful of soil contains as many individual creatures as the total human population. By comparison, our genetic experiments in the laboratory are puny.

Accordingly, the likelihood that we can further improve on the adaptation of an organism to its natural environment is virtually nil. (We may be able to improve the adaptation of an organism to an artificial environment, such as a farm. But this advantage is limited to the boundaries of that environment.) When we breed for "improvement" in an organism—an increase in a property that serves us—both theory and empirical evidence point to a *decrease* in its adaptation to the environment from which the parental strain was taken.

This decrease reflects the costs of the genetic changes that we introduce, for these changes lead to a less efficient or less balanced synthesis of what the organism needs. These costs may be large enough so that the organism becomes dependent on our care for survival; or they may be small enough that it can still become feral again and survive in nature (as with wild horses, dogs, and cats). But the important point is that no domesticated strain has been shown to be *better* adapted than its parental wild type to the original environment, and hence to displace the wild type there. The same can be expected for engineered variants.

There is an exception to the prediction that we cannot improve on nature: When the environment is changed we can sometimes predictably improve adaptation by introducing appropriate genetic changes. An example is an environment changed by the widespread use of antibiotics. This environment will select for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

naturally occurring resistant microbial strains, which arise by spontaneous mutation or via spontaneous genetic recombination. Under these circumstances, if we introduced genes for resistance into otherwise already well-adapted bacteria we could accelerate this population shift. One of the aims of proper regulation of recombinant bacteria is to avoid the spread of such resistance genes to pathogenic organisms.

Limits to genetic novelty and spread

But if we can now remake organisms at will, is there not a qualitative difference between modern genetic engineering and classical domestication? With an unlimited range of products, might not some inadvertently spread beyond our control?

Several arguments should allay this concern. First, even though we can indeed manipulate DNA in the test tube at will, it does not follow that we can modify organisms at will. In order for an organism to develop and function effectively its parts must interact in a coordinated manner, fitting each other like the parts of a smoothly functioning machine. Hence, only those new variants that have a sufficiently coherent, balanced set of genes can survive.

Furthermore, even if a radically altered organism *is* nominally viable, it suffers significant disadvantages in evolutionary competition, as noted above. Recombination of ill-matched genes from distant sources will yield poorly adapted organisms, not the vaguely conceived, dangerous monsters of current science fiction.

As with engineered bacteria, the main new concern with engineered plants—which will ultimately have a much greater variety and a much greater economic and social impact—has been that movable genes will spread from new plants to other species and will create novel, harmful weeds. But principles similar to those described above for bacteria would also mitigate this risk. For such dangers to arise, several conditions would have to be met: cross-pollination to a wild relative, survival and germination of the resulting hybrid embryo, fertility of the resulting plant, its competitive survival and establishment in the environment, and its creation of environmental problems. The many recombinants that have been examined have all failed to overcome these barriers.

But I suspect that these rather theoretical arguments did not have much to do with the gradual realization that genetic engi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

neering is not so dangerous after all. Most important was the simple experience of expanding the work into thousands of laboratories without harm. Another factor was the eventual recognition that organisms containing foreign DNA arise in nature and hence are not as utterly novel as was initially assumed. The initial assumption of great novelty was understandable, not only because the technical advance was an enormous one, but because molecular biologists must have felt a Promethean pride in having apparently created combinations of genes that could never before have existed on earth. But scientists did not create *de novo* the several steps that they used in developing DNA splicing in the test tube. These steps all occur in nature, and the key discoveries simply improved their efficiency. So while these discoveries were essential for producing recombinant bacteria in the laboratory in great variety and in usable quantities, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that in nature bacteria must also take up DNA from foreign sources and produce recombinants, though at a very low rate and with a very low survival value.

In humans, for example, bacteria must occasionally come into contact with DNA released from cells that die continually at the intestinal surface. Viruses could provide another mechanism, since they can introduce genes from a previous host, as well as their own genes, to a new host cell. Our failure to find human genes today in *E. coli*, a bacterium found in the human intestines, does not mean that they were never there: We would expect most such hybrids to be at an evolutionary disadvantage and hence to disappear in subsequent generations.

Indeed, sequences of DNA from distant organisms are sometimes strikingly similar, which provides evidence for this occasional crossing of the barriers between species. The whole body of DNA in the world may therefore be connected horizontally through lateral transfer of small blocks, as well as vertically by descent through normal reproduction. Thus, the new recombinants seem increasingly less radical.

One other feature of the microbial world provides further reassurance: the stringent requirements for pathogenicity. The vast majority of bacteria are not pathogens—they do not cause disease. They are found in soil and bodies of water, where they convert organic matter to simple degradation products (carbon dioxide, ammonia, etc.), which recycle into other microbes or

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

into plants. One does not easily make an effective pathogen out of such harmless bacteria. For with pathogens, as with benign microorganisms, evolutionary success is not ensured by any single, powerful gene; it depends on an effectively interacting ensemble of genes.

Consider the example of diphtheria toxin. The gene that codes for this potent toxin is found in nature only in the diphtheria bacterium, where it is accompanied by other genes that help make the organism an effective pathogen. Diphtheria toxin is not found in any other bacterium. Hybrids that formed the toxin must surely have arisen in nature from time to time but did not survive.

Man-made epidemics?

With increasing recognition of these arguments against a special danger in recombinant bacteria, the guidelines for the use of such organisms, in research and in industry, were progressively relaxed. The issue seemed to be pretty well settled. But in 1984 a new wave of concern arose, as scientists began developing potential applications of biotechnology that would involve the deliberate introduction of engineered organisms into the environment. Examples include the use of such organisms to replace nitrogen in fertilizer, to replace toxic chemical pesticides, to digest toxic organic pollutants (such as oil spills), or to prevent frost damage on crops.

This latest alarm over biotechnology has centered largely on two existing models. The first is of damage to the environment from toxic chemicals. The extent of this damage depends on the scale of the introduction. There is an important difference, however, between this model and that of bioengineered bacteria. With chemicals the harm is created directly by the introduced material, while with bacteria the harm would depend on the uncontrolled multiplication of the progeny. Such spread in turn would depend on the ability of the introduced organism to compete, in a Darwinian world, with those organisms that are already present. And the effect of scale on that competition is clear. If an introduced soil organism is not competitive, even huge numbers can have only a transient and local effect before dying out. Conversely, if it should be more competitive than the native organisms (though that would not be expected, for rea-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sons presented above), even a small, accidental escape from the laboratory could start a spread, just as a single import of smallpox can start an epidemic in a susceptible population.

Thus, scale of introduction is not decisive for competing bacteria. Of course, one can imagine that on a huge scale the "transient and local" effect could be significant, even though it would not result in spread. But that problem would not come as a surprise, and we should be able to control it.

The second major basis for concern over introduced organisms is the harmful spread of certain "exotic" organisms after their importation from distant regions. This analogy has had widespread appeal. The unexpected and costly spread of certain imports, such as starlings and kudzu vine in the United States, or rabbits in Australia, has legitimately caused great concern to ecologists. But the parallel to engineered organisms is weak, and perhaps even specious, because of a key difference: One process moves an unchanged organism to a new environment, while the other changes the organism and then returns it to the original environment.

This distinction has large consequences. Specifically, non-engineered exotic transplants have already been well adapted by evolution to their native environment, where their population density has been limited by various physical and biological factors. In a new environment that lacks these factors the organisms will proliferate excessively. Engineered organisms, in contrast, are ordinarily returned to the *original* environment—and as we have already noted, they are highly likely to be *less* well adapted than the parental strain to that environment. (Of course, the altered organisms may be transplanted to a new environment; but then we would be dealing not with a special problem of recombinants but with the old problem of exotic pests.) Recognizing these considerations, many ecologists have stopped stressing the analogy to transplanted species. Its public appeal, however, persists.

There is still another source of reassurance: the extensive experience already accumulated through the use of genetically modified microbes in agriculture. Such organisms, obtained by traditional genetic methods, were introduced long before recombinants became available. They include strains of *Bacillus thuringiensis* (used to kill insect larvae) and nitrogen-fixing bac-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

teria (used to spare the need for nitrogen in fertilizer). Their regulation was straightforward, and no harm has been detected. Clearly, commercial use of recombinant bacteria, as of any other bacteria, will require similar measures. But the purpose will be primarily to avoid toxicity for humans and animals, rather than to anticipate uncontrollable, harmful spread. (A parallel experience in medicine has been regulation of the use of live, attenuated viruses as vaccines, including smallpox, polio virus, mumps, measles, and rubella.)

Regulatory responses

The regulatory agencies in the United States have responded in disparate ways to the conundrums created by the new genetics. A February 1990 report on national biotechnology policy by the President's Council on Competitiveness was a watershed. Government policy, the report said, should seek "to eliminate unneeded regulatory burdens for all phases of developing new biotechnology products—laboratory and field experiments, product development, and eventually sale and use."

The report further noted that "existing regulatory structures for plants, animals, pharmaceuticals, chemicals and toxic substances provide an adequate framework for the regulation of biotechnology in those instances where private markets fail to provide adequate incentives to avoid unreasonable risks to health and the environment." This was a tacit admission that, although it is somewhat artificial to view living organisms as chemical substances in order to apply existing legislation, new legislation would likely cause even greater problems by treating recombinants as a special case.

The report also echoed earlier recommendations in reports from the National Academy of Sciences and its National Research Council: Regulation should focus on the characteristics and risks of each biotechnology product, and not on the process by which it is created. With a view to the future, the report further declared that "[r]egulatory programs should be designed to accommodate the rapid advances in biotechology. Performance-based standards are, therefore, generally preferred over design standards." These principles were reinforced and further expanded in a February 1992 report of the Council on Competitiveness,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

which defined in greater detail the recommended scope of regulation.

Nevertheless, the requirements of the assorted regulatory agencies remain in various stages of readiness and of compatibility with stated policy. The NIH has been closest to that policy. However, its Recombinant DNA Advisory Committee has by now essentially withdrawn from all areas of genetic engineering except gene therapy in humans. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has long been responsive to the same concerns that were expressed by the Competitiveness Council, and it has not imposed any special procedures or requirements for products made with the new biotechnology. Moreover, in a May 1992 policy statement on regulation of foods from new varieties of plants, the FDA emphasized that its regulations would be based on objective characteristics of the food, and not on the use of particular genetic techniques. It also suggested that, with certain well-defined exceptions, novel varieties could safely be exempted from regulation.

The Department of Agriculture has been somewhat ambivalent. Policies at its Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service have remained essentially unchanged since 1987—though the federal policy on "scope" would seem to dictate some refinement. Another part of the department is engaged in developing regulations for research; current drafts seem incompatible with the federal "scope" policy.

The Environmental Protection Agency has been especially favorable to apprehensive, risk-averse approaches to biotechnology. Since the EPA is charged with safeguarding the environment it has understandably relied heavily on the advice of ecologists, whose professional interests encourage conservatism toward changes in the environment. Indeed, the Ecological Society of America has formally recommended that no proposed introduction of recombinants be approved until it has been examined by ecologists. Since 1984 the EPA has made proposal after proposal focusing specifically on organisms obtained by recombinant DNA techniques. All of these drafts have been incompatible with the key principles of the Council on Competitiveness—and they have not solved the immense practical problems that will arise if every field experiment by a graduate student in an agricultural school must receive specific approval from Washington.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Federal Coordinating Committee on Science and Technology is supposed to integrate the policies of the different agencies, but its efforts, and other ad hoc discussions, have not been notably effective. Problems have arisen not only from differences in the rules of various agencies but also from overlaps in their jurisdiction. Unfortunately, large corporations, which might be expected to be deeply concerned, in general have not vigorously opposed regulations that involve extensive bureaucratic procedures. This may be because these companies are bothered less by expense, which can be passed on, than by unpredictability, which makes planning difficult. In any case, the outcome has been hard on academic researchers and small companies, often the best sources of imaginative products.

Prospects for the future

It is easy to arouse public suspicion of microbes, which are most familiar as "germs" that cause disease. Past costs and errors in the exploitation of new technologies have generated a cadre of political activists who have become skillful in using the courts and the media to promote their position. Moreover, as noted before, the professional concerns of ecologists encourage conservatism about changes in the environment, while various lay environmentalist organizations are even more conservative—and emotional. The genetic revolution thus calls for a great deal of education, in our schools and to the adult public, on the beneficent, essential role of most of the world's microbes. (Only a tiny fraction of all microbes are pathogens, attacking organic matter while it is alive instead of waiting until it is dead.)

In this essay I have emphasized evolutionary principles, as the broadest base for prediction in biology. But this reliance on theory is unlikely to be fully accepted even by many biologists—let alone by a public that is skeptical about evolution. Yet if we ignore evolutionary principles, trying instead to assess the risks only on the basis of empirical tests, we encounter other limitations. For we cannot hope to duplicate in our experiments all the conditions that might be encountered in nature, or all the variants that might arise.

Instead, as in all of science, we should feel confident in building on principles after we have examined a reasonable number of concrete variables. For most classes of bacterial recombi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nants currently attracting interest, I believe we have met that requirement. Nevertheless, recombinants are still subject to special regulation, in the futile and expensive quest for the virtually absolute safety that the public has been led to expect. The cost of such regulations includes the loss of substantial benefits from potential new products and, in some cases, a decrease in safety, since these restrictions impede the use of engineered organisms to replace more toxic chemicals.

As time passes without visible harm from biotechnology it seems inevitable that anxiety will continue to abate, and that regulations will eventually become more uniform and sensible. But meanwhile the success of demagogic appeals to public anxiety about the unknown has been discouraging, and it has led some administrative agencies to be more vigorous in responding to "perceptions of public perceptions" than in trying to educate the public on the scientific evidence. The resulting delays in testing have been burdensome for those scientists whose morale and momentum—not to mention fulfillment of the obligations of their grants—depend on tests of their products in the field.

A conspicuous example involved an ingenious use of a recombinant bacterium to decrease frost damage to certain crops. This organism, a derivative of *Pseudomonas syringae* called ice-minus, had been deprived of the gene for a component of the bacterial surface that initiates the formation of damaging ice crystals on the plant leaves. This modification makes the organism comparable to the attenuated pathogens used as vaccines in humans. Moreover, similar ice-minus derivatives are found quite widely in nature (in smaller numbers than the ice-forming strain). For these reasons the ice-minus organism, used to displace its ice-plus parent, appears to be as safe a recombinant as one can imagine.

Nevertheless, environmental activists, encouraged by Jeremy Rifkin, succeeded in alarming citizens living in the neighborhood of the proposed tests. The resulting protests caused the tests to be forbidden successively in two growing seasons. When the tests were finally conducted, with stringent precautions, knowledgeable observers could be either disgusted or amused at the sight of the experimenters—forced to wear "moon-suits" while spraying the plants—standing a few feet from photographers ply-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing their trade without protection from the presumptively dangerous spray.

This history illustrates the difficulties encountered when participatory democracy is applied to science. It is one thing for citizens to weigh in on policy decisions about conflicting goals, but quite another for the public to participate in technical analyses of risks and benefits. Unfortunately, the courts and administrative agencies have often shared or responded to scientifically unsound, distorted public perceptions. It is to be hoped that, with experience and familiarity, they will learn to apply common sense to the increasingly important science of genetic engineering.

•

CONTRIBUTORS

•

PAUL A. CANTOR is professor of English at the University of Virginia. He is the author of *Shakespeare's Rome* and the *Hamlet* volume in the *Cambridge Landmarks of World Literature* series.

BERNARD D. DAVIS is Adele Lehman Professor of Bacterial Physiology emeritus at Harvard Medical School. He is the editor of *The Genetic Revolution: Scientific Prospects and Public Perceptions* (Johns Hopkins University Press).

JOHN W. ELLWOOD is professor of public policy at the University of California, Berkeley. ERIC M. PATASHNIK is a graduate student in political science at the University of California, Berkeley.

GEORGE R. LANOUE is director of the policy sciences graduate program at the University of Maryland Baltimore County.

HEYWOOD T. SANDERS is associate professor of urban administration at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Nostalgia as family policy

ANDREW J. CHERLIN

IN "For the Sake of the Children" [Summer 1992], Richard Gill criticizes a study several collaborators and I published on the effects of divorce on children.† Gill first charges that our methodology and our interpretation are flawed, then launches into a broader discussion of contemporary marriage and divorce. In an earlier *Public Interest* article, "Day Care or Parental Care?" [Fall 1991], Gill expressed similar concerns about the direction of family policy and the well-being of American children.

Gill's concern about children is well-founded, and we share it. It was never our intent to conduct a study that would absolve divorcing parents of guilt. In our current research, in fact, we have found some harmful effects of divorce on young children who were assessed shortly after their parents' marriages broke up. Nevertheless, we think that Gill's procedural criticisms are groundless and, more important, that the underlying themes of both his articles are unhelpful as a guide to public policy concerning children and families. In this reply, I will address Gill's specific criticisms and then respond more generally to his two articles.

For our study of divorce, we analyzed statistics from two surveys, one British and one American, that had followed national samples of children and their families for several years. We identified about 12,000 seven-year-old British children and 800 seven- to eleven-year-old American children whose parents were married at the beginning of the survey period, and we tracked these children for the next four to five years. Not surprisingly, children whose parents separated or divorced displayed

†Andrew J. Cherlin, Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr., P. Lindsay Chase-Lansdale, Kathleen E. Kiernan, Philip K. Robins, Donna Ruane Morrison, and Julien O. Teitler, "Longitudinal Studies of Effects of Divorce on Children in Great Britain and the United States," *Science*, Vol. 252 (June 7, 1991), pp. 1386-1389.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

more behavior problems and performed more poorly in school than children whose parents remained married. But when we looked back to the beginnings of the surveys, we found that the children—particularly boys—whose parents were then married but would later divorce were *already* displaying more behavior problems and performing more poorly in school than the children whose parents would remain married. We concluded:

> Overall, the evidence suggests that much of the effect of divorce on children can be predicted by conditions that existed well before the separation occurred.... [T]he British and U.S. longitudinal studies suggest that those concerned with the effects of divorce on children should consider reorienting their thinking. At least as much attention needs to be paid to the processes that occur in troubled, intact families as to the trauma that children suffer after their parents separate.

ALTHOUGH Gill agrees with our call for more attention to troubled, intact families, he disputes our conclusion that much of the harm experienced by children of divorce is due to conditions that exist before separation occurs. He notes that the British study, by far the larger of the two, followed children from 1965 to 1969, when the divorce rate was much lower than it is today. Only 11 percent of British children during that period experienced a divorce before they were sixteen, compared to about 40 percent of U.S. children today. The social climate in Great Britain, Gill argues, must have been more favorable for keeping marriages together and making them work. Gill then goes on to make the crucial assumption—without any evidence—that a high proportion of those British marriages ending in divorce must have been "very troubled." He speculates that these marriages were characterized by "physical, sexual, or psychological abuses, whether directed toward child or spouse, that not only justify but clearly mandate separation and divorce." No wonder, he concludes, that the British children were often troubled before the separation—only deeply troubled families got divorced.

But were the British marriages that ended in divorce much more troubled than American marriages that end in divorce today? Although we cannot be sure, we doubt it for two reasons. First, we deleted from our British study all families in which separation occurred before the child's seventh birthday. We did this because the interviews conducted with the parents and teachers of seven-year-olds in intact families provided us with the first detailed family information that could serve as a pre-separa-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tion benchmark. A fortuitous result is that couples whose marriages lasted fewer than seven years were excluded. In fact, we excluded more divorced couples than we retained. We think it very likely that seriously troubled, abusive marriages tend to break up more quickly than marriages with more minor sources of conflict. If so, then the families we retained are probably more like contemporary families than Gill believes.

Second, each interview with the parent of a seven-year-old was conducted by a Local Authority Health Visitor, a trained nurse employed by the municipality, who normally visited each mother before her child was born and returned afterward, often several times if the family was experiencing problems. The Health Visitor's questionnaire included a checklist that noted any family difficulties or use of social-welfare services. Relatively few problems were noted for the families that later divorced. Health Visitors checked "domestic tension" for 17 percent of later-divorced families, "financial difficulties" for 16 percent, contact with the child-welfare department for 8 percent, mental illness or neurosis for 7 percent, and alcoholism for 1 percent. To be sure, the Health Visitors may have been unaware of many problems. Still, the reports do not suggest that these families were in great conflict.

OUR American survey data were recent enough (1976 to 1981) that Gill could not contend they were collected in an era of lower divorce. Yet we found that American boys, just like British ones, showed many behavior problems before their parents divorced. In the case of American girls, we found that once we controlled for pre-divorce problems they showed modestly better behavior if their parents divorced than if they stayed together. It is understandable that Gill seizes upon this puzzling finding for girls as evidence that our American results are flawed. Yet the gender difference did not surprise clinicians who deal with children. Several leading studies of divorce have found what appear to be greater effects on boys than on girls. In fact, a twelve-year longitudinal study of children in Berkeley, California, found that girls whose families experienced high levels of conflict showed fewer outward signs of problems than girls in less troubled families. Developmental psychologist Robert E. Emery writes in *Marriage, Divorce, and Children's Adjustment* that girls sometimes react to the stress of divorce by displaying over-controlled, "good" behavior. These girls are, indeed, distressed by the divorce, according to Emery, but they respond to their distress by trying to help out and be accommodating. In divorce—and in reaction to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

other sources of stress—girls tend to internalize their distress, which makes it difficult to observe. Boys, on the other hand, externalize their distress through obvious misbehavior. Thus, our American findings are consistent with the observations of developmental and clinical psychologists.

Gill also presents a table from a recent American study showing that children from disrupted families experienced more difficulties, but that study did not take into account what the children's families were like before the disruptions.

YET GILL'S DISCUSSION extends far beyond our article and the procedures we followed. He argues that living in a high-divorce-rate society leads couples to focus more on self-fulfillment and less on keeping their marriages together, to the detriment of children:

> According to this argument, divorce involves an important externality. My divorce affects not only my own children but also, by adding to the divorce rate, the dysfunction and conflict in other marriages and hence the welfare of children in other families.

The claim here is that in a high-divorce-rate society spouses feel freer to argue because they know divorce is an option if they can't resolve their differences. The opposite position could, of course, be argued: that in a high-divorce-rate society there is less conflict in marriages because couples that can't get along divorce. Moreover, it is possible that one couple's divorce could make other couples *less* likely to divorce. Studies show that adults who divorce experience considerable anguish and distress; even those who initiate a divorce often report feelings of loss, sadness, and anger for years. The married friends of persons who divorce witness this distress, are often asked to provide comfort, and therefore learn how difficult a divorce is. A greater awareness of the emotional and economic costs of divorce may be one reason why the U.S. divorce rate has declined about 10 percent from its 1981 peak.

I could not find any hard evidence about whether there was less conflict in marriages when divorce rates were lower a few decades ago; nor does Gill cite any evidence. His assertion remains an open question. Nevertheless, intrigued by his argument, I examined the historical literature on the American family in the 1950s. For example, historian Elaine Tyler May, in *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, studied the records of 300 middle-class couples who were interviewed extensively in 1955. These couples, as Gill would predict,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

did indeed try to stifle their anger and avoid conflict so that their marriages would stay together. But the interviews also suggest that the suppression of conflict came at a price—and that wives paid that price.

When the wives were asked to evaluate their marriages, they first listed the benefits: economic security, a nice home, children, companionship. Yet they were twice as likely as their husbands to report that they were dissatisfied with their marriages, and twice as many said they would not marry the same person if they had it to do over again. Many stayed in their marriages despite hardship, strain, and bitterness. One wife wrote:

> One particular source of friction: My husband is a firm believer in "woman's place is in the home"—so it is, to a degree—but I have always felt the need for outside activities and interest in community affairs because I felt mentally stagnant by not taking part in outside programs and because I feel morally obligated to take part, in view of my education and some capabilities. He takes no interest in my interests and belittles most women's groups.... Whatever I have done has had to be at no inconvenience to him—and often with a scornful attitude on his part.

Another wrote:

> Much of our trouble has centered around my husband's unwillingness to do work around the house, which he says is my sole responsibility.... This was not too bad until I had the third baby within five years.... I became so exhausted that I got very little sleep, even when [the new baby] did, and I had to be up early with the other two little ones.... I believe I had a nervous breakdown but I knew psychiatric help would be expensive and my husband said, "Your trouble is all in your head and you don't have to feel this way if you don't want to."

Nevertheless, imbued with 1950s family morality, this woman said she never considered divorce, never regretted her marriage, and considered it "decidedly more happy than average." There is no record in the book of the impact of her distress on her children.

If these records are representative, it appears the lower divorce rates of the 1950s were achieved not by greater marital bliss but rather by a rigid division of labor that hid the substantial stress and frustration that many women experienced. This is hardly an original thesis—it was the message of Betty Friedan's 1963 book, *The Feminine Mystique*. Yet the 1950s was the decade in which family life came closest to Gill's ideals. For one thing, the divorce rate was substantially lower then. For another,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

far fewer married women worked outside the home while they were raising children.

Gill's preference for the breadwinner-homemaker family is even more explicit in his 1991 article on day care, in which he criticizes a report of the National Research Council's Panel on Child Care Policy (of which I was a member). That report called for more government support for out-of-home child care and for work leaves for infant care. Gill argues instead for greater government support for stay-at-home parents.

I REALIZE THAT there is no monolithic conservative position on family policy and, for that matter, that Gill may not consider himself a conservative. But his positions exemplify the main themes of conservative writings on this issue. The great contribution of conservatives in the 1970s and 1980s was to focus attention on the effects of changes in the family on children's well-being at a time when liberals were inclined to defend every kind of family and to endorse individualism uncritically. But if the strength of conservatives has been their diagnosis, their weakness is their prescription. Today, conservative observers, largely male, rightly decry the decline in children's well-being, correctly state that sacrifices will be required if the situation is to be improved, and then announce that women should make these sacrifices.

In his article on divorce, for example, Gill outlines the potential drawbacks of plans that would combine tougher child-support enforcement with a guaranteed minimum benefit for custodial parents (usually mothers) who are owed support. Here is a measure that would force fathers to be financially responsible for their children, cut welfare costs (since the government would keep most of the payments collected from fathers if the mothers were on welfare), and provide an income floor for millions of children whose standard of living plummets after their parents divorce. What could be wrong with this plan? It would reduce the economic risk of divorce for the mother, writes Gill. This could make wives "more willing to divorce, since more financial security after divorce is now assured." And so a promising measure that would undoubtedly raise the standard of living of large numbers of children and that, as Gill acknowledges, "could conceivably render husbands more averse to divorce," is implicitly criticized because it might increase women's economic independence.

Similarly, in his day-care article, Gill argues against requirements that employers provide unpaid work-leaves for parents

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

with newborns (as provided for by the family-leave bill vetoed by George Bush in September 1992). Even many liberals are uneasy about the accumulating evidence that full-time employment of both parents may be harmful to children in their first year of life. At the same time, however, most studies show little or no negative effect from out-of-home care after age one or two, suggesting that the problem is of limited duration. Parental-leave legislation would allow employed mothers or fathers to take time off to be with their new babies. What's wrong with this legislation? "Guaranteed leaves," writes Gill, "may tie the mother more closely to the employing firm and encourage her to return to work as soon as possible." Once again, a measure that would improve the well-being of children is shot down for fear that it might encourage more mothers to return to work after the birth of their children—even though a majority do so already.

GILL SEEMS TO WISH that many of the millions of employed mothers would quit their jobs and return home. He mourns the passing of the child-centered 1950s. I agree with Gill that in some ways (such as levels of violence and drug use) children were better off in the 1950s than they are in the 1990s. But I question whether it is fair and, even more so, whether it is realistic to make a return to the breadwinner-homemaker family the basis of family policy. What is the moral justification for once again asking mothers to make all of the sacrifices that are necessary to improve children's lives? Why can't we envision alternatives in which men share the burden? Until recently, men with employed wives had not increased the amount of time they spent on child care and housework. But there are signs of change. A 1985 time-use survey directed by John P. Robinson of the University of Maryland showed that men's contributions at home have begun to grow. Moreover, it is increasingly acceptable for men to care for—and to care about—their children. The May 20, 1991 cover of *Fortune*, a magazine with a heavily male readership, proclaimed: "Can your career hurt your kids? Yes, say many experts. But smart parents—and flexible companies—won't let it happen." Such a cover story would have been inconceivable ten years ago. We need to consider restructuring careers so that both women and men can take some time off during the three or four years that are needed to raise two children beyond infancy. We could, for example, build in leaves of absence for law firm associates before they are evaluated for partnerships, or for assistant professors before they are judged for tenure. We could also allow secretaries, machinists, and postal workers to take leaves of absence.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Even those who judge it fair to ask women to make most of the sacrifices need to ask themselves whether there is any real possibility that millions of employed women can be enticed—or even pushed—to stay at home. The economic reality is that men's wages have remained stagnant since the oil-price shocks of 1973. During the same period, housing prices have increased. For better or worse, many couples are convinced that two incomes are necessary to live the American dream. And for better or worse, the American economy depends on the services of the women who have poured into the labor force, where they typically work for lower wages than firms would have to pay male replacements.

If it is unlikely that we can return to the heyday of the breadwinner-homemaker family, or if it is simply unfair to make that our goal, then Gill's positions on divorce and employed mothers are of little help in formulating family policy. Enticing, coaxing, shaming, and even impoverishing women into staying married and staying home seems to make up virtually the entire conservative program. There is no vision of the future, just nostalgia for the past. Any measure that could remotely increase mothers' economic independence is opposed, no matter how many children it would help. Little thought is given to how men might increase their contribution to their children's well-being. Granted, the conservative lament for a lost era stems from a deep concern for children. But if we won't be returning to the 1950s anytime soon, then conservative writings about the family provide us with little guidance about where to go from here.

Andrew J. Cherlin is professor of sociology at Johns Hopkins University.

Family breakdown as family policy

RICHARD T. GILL

PROFESSOR CHERLIN'S critique can be summarized in three claims: 1) that my concerns about technical flaws in his *Science* article are "groundless"; 2) that my hypothesis that the increased availability and social acceptability of divorce may lead

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to more marital problems cannot be supported by "hard evidence" (and, in fact, that anecdotal evidence suggests the opposite); and 3) that the positions I express in my articles exemplify the "main themes of conservative writings" and therefore are long on diagnosis, short on prescription, and "unhelpful as a guide to public policy concerning children and the family." I will address these criticisms in order.

WITH REGARD to the *Science* article, I argued that its findings were sometimes inconsistent, at other times inconclusive, and, in general, seriously incomplete. My conclusion was that the article "may well give a misleading impression of the risks we are currently taking with the well-being of our children."

The most notable example of inconsistency was the finding that the behavior of American girls is actually improved by divorce. In response, Cherlin informs us that this result is not inconsistent at all, that girls often "internalize their distress" and show particularly "good" behavior when troubled. Hence the results for American girls are quite in line "with the observations of developmental and clinical psychologists."

Cherlin seems unaware that this response only worsens his problem. For if "behavior problems" do not measure the effects of divorce on girls, why was this index used to judge these effects in the first place? The study becomes simply irrelevant to the question under consideration. Furthermore, Cherlin's response does not even address the consistency question. The sharp difference in effect is shown only for American girls and not for British girls, who seem to respond very much like British boys, and indeed American boys as well.

For that matter, where is this great consensus on the basic difference in boy-girl reactions anyway? In my original article I referred to the 1988 National Health Interview Survey of Child Health covering 17,100 American children (in contrast to the 65 divorce-affected children—girls and boys—out of a subsample of 822 U.S. children in the *Science* study). In this much larger study, girls in disrupted families showed behavioral problems just as serious as those of boys. Even more strikingly, in a study of a nationally representative sample of 1,197 children, Paul Allison and Frank Furstenberg (the latter of whom happens to be one of the co-authors of the *Science* study) actually found *more* serious problems for girls after divorce, with respect both to behavioral problems and distress. In a 1989 article in *Developmental Psychology*, they concluded:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> Our data provide virtually no support for the hypothesis that marital dissolution has a greater impact on boys. Of the 19 outcome measures, only 3 (all in 1981) showed significant differences between boys and girls in the effects of marital dissolution: teacher's report of problem behavior, child's report of dissatisfaction, and child's report of distress. In all three cases, the effects of a dissolution were greater for girls than for boys.

Where the *Science* findings are not inconsistent—as they clearly are with respect to U.S. girls—they are often inconclusive and essentially uninformative. In my earlier article, I speculated that the reason Cherlin found that British children often had problems before divorce was that in a low-divorce-rate society such as Britain in the 1960s, those few marriages that did break up were likely to have been particularly troubled. The surprise, if any, was that prior marital and family problems accounted for only half the difficulties these children experienced after divorce.

Cherlin's response is more puzzling than his original argument. He now claims that the Health Visitors noted "relatively few problems" in those British families that were then intact but would later break up. But surely the central point of his study is that many of the difficulties children experience after divorce are due to "processes that occur in troubled, intact families." Is he now saying that these originally "intact" families were not particularly "troubled"? The confusion mounts even further when Cherlin interprets my argument to mean that these British marriages were "much more troubled than American marriages that end in divorce today." In fact, a pivotal theme of my article is precisely that American marriages today may be very troubled, at least in part because of our current high divorce rate.

Indeed, it is because of the failure of the *Science* article to consider the possible interaction between a high divorce rate and the quality of marital life that I argued that the study was not only inconsistent and inconclusive, but seriously incomplete. This is the single most important point I raised in my article. When divorces are ubiquitous, socially acceptable, and easily available, might this not, I asked, result in important changes in the character of intact families prior to any actual or even contemplated divorce? My basic logic was that the omnipresence of divorce makes it harder for couples to commit themselves wholeheartedly to the marital union and, indeed, encourages and really requires them to take protective steps that often undermine the quality of the union. If true, the total impact of divorce on children would have to include some estimate of the effects of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

family troubles prior to divorce which are nevertheless attributable to the high general divorce rate. Since the *Science* study not only did not answer but did not even raise this question, I argued that it was seriously incomplete and thus likely to underestimate the overall negative effect of family breakdown on children.

THIS BRINGS US to Cherlin's second major point. He speculates that, contrary to my hypothesis, marital problems may actually be lower in today's high-divorce-rate United States than in the lower-divorce-rate societies of the past. Since he "could not find any hard evidence" on this matter, he offers anecdotes from the 1950s describing the suppressed distress of wives and suggests that these descriptions may well be "representative."

Actually, if he had looked a little harder, he could have found quite a bit of evidence on this issue. Apart from the several examples I sketched out in my original article (all of which he ignores), there are a number of studies suggesting that marital problems have increased *pari passu* with divorce rates in the modern era. Roderick Phillips, in his comprehensive history of divorce, *Putting Asunder: A History of Divorce in Western Society* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), suggests that "marriage breakdown" (referring to troubles within a formally intact marriage) is more frequent today than it was in the past:

> In general, marriages were stable in Western society and ... a significant extent of marriage breakdown is peculiar to modern times. This conclusion is at variance with the commonly expressed notion that marriage breakdown has historically been common and that rising divorce rates in recent times simply tend more accurately to reflect an essentially constant incidence of marriage breakdown....

Specific evidence with respect to recent American experience has been amassed by Norval D. Glenn of the University of Texas. In a 1991 summary of surveys, Glenn notes that some surveys

> have shown an increase in expressed negative attitudes toward marriage since the 1950s—not a surprising finding in view of the fact that Americans' propensity to marry, either for the first time or after divorce, has declined in recent decades. For instance, the *Americans View their Mental Health Surveys*, conducted in 1957 and 1976, asked respondents how a person's life is changed by being married and classified the responses into positive, neutral, or negative. The positive responses declined from 43 percent to 30 percent from 1957 to 1976 and the negative ones increased from 23 to 28 percent.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Glenn also undertook a study based on data from the General Social Surveys and found that there had been

> a substantial decline in the percentage of ever-married Americans who, at virtually all lengths of time after their first marriages, were in intact first marriages they reported to be "very happy." For instance, for persons who first married about a decade earlier, this percentage declined from 46 in the middle 1970s to 33 in the middle to late 1980s. Similar declines occurred in the percentage of ever-married persons who were in marriages of any order (first, second, or subsequent) they reported to be "very happy."

On the basis of his research, Glenn has arrived at conclusions virtually identical to those suggested in my article, namely that a decline in the ideal of marital permanence and an unwillingness of couples to make full commitments to the married state tend to increase the "probability that marriages will become unsatisfactory." In this connection, it is also very important to note that Glenn finds increasing dissatisfaction not only with marriage but also with parenthood. When respondents were asked how having children affects a person's life, positive responses fell from 58 to 44 percent and negative responses increased from 22 to 28 percent over the 1957-1976 period. This is also very much in line with the argument of my article since, as I pointed out, children in a high-divorce-rate society may become a serious economic burden for a divorced mother and may disappear in whole or part from the life of the father, if and when a divorce occurs.

In short, Cherlin is either unaware of or chooses to ignore such evidence as there is on the main issue between us and does not even respond to the underlying analytic questions. This is most unfortunate. For if our high divorce rate does in fact affect the quality of married life, including attitudes toward parenthood, then it is irresponsible to ignore this in an article purporting to measure "the effects of divorce on children." To do so is to provide false reassurance to divorcing couples and thus further undermine an institution—the intact family—that is already under siege and whose breakdown may well be the greatest single threat to the welfare of our children.

THE FINAL ISSUE raised by Cherlin's critique deals with politics and whether those who espouse "conservative themes" (apparently including myself) are hopelessly "nostalgic," with no "vision of the future" but only "of the past." Evidently we oppose women's "independence" and yearn for a return to the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"breadwinner-homemaker family," with women making "all of the sacrifices" and men failing to "share the burden."

Not having been designated their spokesperson, I cannot speak for "conservatives"; I can, however, speak with some confidence for myself. That I oppose women's independence and wish to force them back into the home, as Cherlin claims, comes as a great surprise to me, as indeed it would to readers of my 1992 book (coauthored with Nathan Glazer and Stephan Thernstrom), *Our Changing Population*. In describing desirable future family structures in that book, we list as the very first objective:

> 1. Men agree not only in principle but in practice that women shall have equal opportunity to explore the full range of career possibilities open to men. The demographic factors we have been discussing in this book—longer life expectancies and historically low fertility rates—make any other arrangement for women untenable.

I then specifically note that the two-career family is a "basic assumption" of our analysis, though I add that ideally "it must not lead to the neglect of the future generation." I also argue that all child-care benefits available to wives should also be available to husbands.

I was even more surprised to learn of my opposition to plans that would "combine tougher child-support enforcement with a guaranteed minimum benefit for custodial parents (usually mothers) who are owed support." I had always imagined that I was strongly in favor of such plans. In my article, I did not consider the desirability or undesirability of child-support enforcement measures, but simply tried to analyze their complex effects from different perspectives. Would they make the husband more or less averse to divorce? The wife? What might be their effect on the quality of the marriage? To establish his case against me, Cherlin is forced to ignore my statement that such measures might have some "positive effects on the quality of the marriage in that the women involved would not have to take as much prior protective action to insure against the unfavorable economic consequences of divorce." The fact that such measures contribute to a woman's sense of protection while still in the marriage is a very strong point in their favor. Also, of course, they offer absolutely necessary protection for children in the event a divorce occurs. Would anyone reading Cherlin's critique even dream that this is my actual position on the matter?

These misinterpretations (and several others) of my positions seem to derive from my efforts to consider more than one side of any given issue. This bad habit of mine often puts me into

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sharp conflict with dedicated advocates of particular public policies. For example, the report of the National Research Council's child-care panel (of which Cherlin was a member) urges a whole series of new government family-policy initiatives, all of which are designed single-mindedly to promote out-of-home care for the infants, toddlers, and preschoolers of working parents, both married and single. The breakdown of the family, whether through divorce, illegitimacy, or the farming out of basic infant and child care to extra-family institutions is taken as a given. In its place, the state will not only take over historic family functions, but will actually tax intact families in which one parent stays home to raise preschool children in order to subsidize families which in many cases are two-earner families to begin with. That a significant effect of such policies might be to accelerate the total collapse of an institution that arguably is still the main hope we have for adequately raising and nurturing the next generation is not even considered.

MY OWN "vision of the future"—if I may borrow the phrase—is quite different. I do not take the total collapse of the family as a given. I certainly do not favor measures that actively promote such a collapse. I believe, first of all, that we must face squarely the harm that many of our current social and political arrangements are doing to our young children. That is why I felt compelled to criticize the *Science* article. It clearly provides comfort and reassurance to divorcing couples, comfort and reassurance not justified by the weak and uncertain findings of the study itself. When we look at the condition of today's children—poverty, school performance, crime, drugs, suicides, obesity, behavioral and psychological problems—I say it is time to face up to our responsibilities for their better nurture and care.

Second, I believe that there are important measures that would both benefit children and promote rather than undermine the family. In my article on child care, I mentioned the concept of a Parental Bill of Rights: "parental," mind you, not "maternal," since husbands could also apply. The bill would be modelled on the GI Bill of Rights adopted after World War II. Parents who stayed home to raise their young children would accumulate credits toward future training—at high school, vocational school, college, professional school, or even post-professional school—once their children no longer required full-time parental care. There is simply no reason, as I note in the last sentence of that article, that parental care should not "be given at least an equal chance to maintain itself in the years ahead."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

I myself, and I hope the "conservatives" unfairly characterized by Cherlin, will not allow him the exclusive right to conceive of what lies ahead. For Cherlin's vision of the future seems little more than a projection and intensification of current trends into the coming decades. I believe, or at least hope, that for the sake of our children we can do much, much better than that.

Richard T. Gill has taught economics at Harvard University and was the economic analyst for the television series Economics U$A. *He is co-author of* Our Changing Population *(Prentice Hall).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WINTER BOOKS

•

contents

Mary R. Lefkowitz on Camille Paglia
p. 93

Joseph Adelson on families and the 1960s
p. 97

Eric Reis on biodiversity
p. 102

Suzanne Garment on pundits
p. 108

Roger Starr on urban renewal
p. 114

Thomas L. Pangle on Martin Diamond
p. 120

Joshua Abramowitz on polling
p. 127

Irving Louis Horowitz on postmodern sociology
p. 132

•

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Madonna's intellectual

MARY R. LEFKOWITZ

***Camille Paglia*: Sex, Art, and American Culture: Essays.** *Vintage. 337 pp. $13.00.*

AS THE TITLE suggests, many of the pieces in this collection are variations on the themes of Paglia's *Sexual Personae*. Paglia identifies the archetypal elements in pop culture, sees beauty in advertisements, and finds deep meaning in rock routines and role-playing. Her categories are universal and all-encompassing. No academic nit-picking here. "Madonna has both the dynamic power of dance and the static Apollonian power of iconicism." Period. Never mind whether Nietzsche's exciting, but simplistic, characterization of experience really works, either for the Greeks or us. Along with the Nietzschean Apollo and Dionysus, Paglia analyzes human experience with the sweeping Freudian categories of male and female. She seeks to fuse Frazer and Freud, restore Frazer to Jung, link present to past. Such generous helpings of intellectual sauce, so readily applied to both high- and low-cultural fare, make her work look appetizing and even nourishing. But after one puts the book down, the meal does not sit so well on the stomach. One begins to wonder whether one has really had the intellectual feast promised by the delectable prose.

But since, nonetheless, I keep coming back to Paglia's restaurant, I'm under some obligation to explain why I like it. In part, it's because Paglia wants to communicate; she's enthusiastic about her ideas, and she has a lot of them. Both *Sexual Personae* and *Sex, Art, and American Culture* are fun to read—no academic jargon, no complex new theories, no twisted arguments, not too many footnotes. There is no pretense that the authorial "I" conceals an objective, dispassionate persona; the reader knows exactly who is speaking, where she grew up, her ethnicity, the name of her grandmother (who was never wrong, even when she was), details of her academic career, and what she thinks about

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

many topics that do not fit under the rubric of her title. It's a refreshing change to read a book by someone who admits what she likes and dislikes, especially when most academics, even when they're eager for revenge, pretend that they were not angry at your condescending references to them in a footnote, or your failure to list one of their articles in your allegedly comprehensive bibliography.

Despite her affection for popular culture, Paglia also loves and knows *high* culture. Not only has she read widely in the literature of many civilizations and seen what is in the museums, but she remembers it and has made it part of her life. In addition, she has a gift for finding and using the *métaphore juste* that is characteristic of writers who pay attention to their style and like to play with ideas. She is even able to make fun of herself, and to point out her weaknesses along with her strengths. She makes it luminously clear that for her teaching is "a performance art." The stage directions included in the transcript of her long and discursive "M.I.T. lecture" made me wish she had enclosed a videotape: "[*lowers voice to an unctuous, monotonous whisper*]," "[*imitates chirpy dowager*]," "[*flashes her skirt*]." She switches roles and moves from thought to thought with dazzling dexterity: She is at once the lone cowboy shooting up the saloon of academe *and* the ingénue daughter of immigrants trapped in the hypocritical WASP spider web of academic politics. Who is the real Paglia? What is her overarching theory of popular culture? I'm not sure I know, but I don't think it matters. It is the images that she projects on the mind's screen, and the honesty of her assertions, that stick in one's brain (or stomach).

THE AMBITIOUS TITLE of *Sex, Art, and American Culture* only hints at the subject of the most substantive item in this collection, "Junk Bonds and Corporate Raiders: Academe in the Hour of the Wolf," a long article reviewing two collections of essays, John J. Winkler's *Constraints of Desire* (1989) and David M. Halperin's *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality* (1990). These books were reviewed enthusiastically in the *Times Literary Supplement* by Martha Nussbaum, the influential professor of philosophy, classics, and comparative literature at Brown, who approved of the authors' abstract notion of an "anthropology" of homosexuality. Paglia cannily deduces from the tone of the review that Nussbaum was "inspired with elegiac emotions" because Winkler had died of AIDS.

In fact, as Paglia shows in some detail, the two books, although written about (homo)sexuality by professed homosexuals,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

provide little new insight into ancient erotic practices (with the exception of an interesting and well-documented piece by Winkler about magical erotic spells). Both Winkler and Halperin apply their own versions of Michel Foucault's methodology in his *History of Sexuality*. Halperin criticizes the classical scholars who do not regard Foucault's work as centrally important because of what Halperin calls "territorial hostility." But in fact, as Paglia points out, neither Foucault nor his two followers ever demonstrate that Foucault's method actually *works*. What Halperin sees as a fault Paglia describes as a virtue: Unlike Foucault, the classicists who have studied homosexuality have insisted on situating ancient customs in their historical context. Paglia shows explicitly and vividly why Foucault's views are not especially enlightening for an understanding of the ancient world, appealing as they may seem for dealing with some of the problems presented by modern society.

Halperin compares Foucault to such luminaries of the past as Dante and Nietzsche. Paglia regards Foucault as a fraud, a second-hand purveyor of the ideas of Emile Durkheim. In particular, she attacks Foucault's confusion of social custom with political power. Power, she claims, is his "big squishy pink-marshmallow word ... which neither he nor his followers understand." She insists that Foucault, Lacan, and Derrida have been so eagerly accepted by American academics because "they offer a self-exculpating cosmic explanation for the normal professorial state of resentment, alienation, dithery passivity, and inaction." This formulation proves to be a helpful guide to the understanding of some of the more intricate convolutions of Halperin's prose, and to some of his more outrageous dogmas, such as "sex was phallic action ... it revolved around who had the phallus, was defined by what was done with the phallus, and was polarized by the distribution of phallic pleasure." Ancient women did not write so much as men, but those who did (like Sappho or Praxilla) would not have agreed with him.

Eschewing the usual academic circumlocution, Paglia faults Winkler for clumsy and irrelevant concern about Sappho's use of dildoes, and Halperin for his blinkered failure to understand how Plato could allow Socrates' instructor in love, Diotima, to be a woman. But soon one begins painfully to realize that she is indicting not just the writers of these two books but all of us who can claim some responsibility for the present state of American academe. Like Allan Bloom in *The Closing of the American Mind*, she calls for a return to the basics, memorizing, reading the canon of great authors, paying attention to undergraduates.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

She is violently disdainful of the tone and content of Women's Studies programs, which she regards as soft options, refuges for the feeble, and centers of unexamined group-think. It is not hard to take exception to her criticisms, because they are so sweeping. But at the same time, even the most trenchant of her remarks contains at least several kernels of truth. Why is it that so many educated women (not to mention U.S. senators) believed Anita Hill without asking, as Paglia does, about the *context* or *tone* of Justice Thomas' supposed remarks? Why, asks Paglia, not give even more credit to the women who confronted men who made such remarks as soon as they made them, regardless of the consequences for their own careers?

UNDERSTANDABLY, Paglia's targets have not been pleased by either what she said or how she said it. And the nature of her criticism, which confronts and declaims, but without detailed examination or documentation, has encouraged her victims to respond in kind, with denials and counter-accusations. It is a pity that Paglia's confrontational style elicits such responses, because as her discussion makes clear, she is neither a male chauvinist nor a homophobe, and the quality of modern undergraduate education would certainly be improved if people could bring themselves to listen to what she has to say. For example, we might be able to rid ourselves of the notion that the process of education is primarily a power struggle, and that the relationship between (or among) the sexes has more to do with power than with affection. In both cases, as Paglia shows, Foucault and his disciples have led us to mistake metaphor for fact.

But it is perhaps an even greater pity that Paglia's attack on the educational establishment, however justified, has been and will continue to be used as an indictment of the value of higher education, and will contribute to the already considerable popular misunderstanding of what it is that people in universities actually do. It may be forgotten that her indictment applies mainly to instruction in the humanities, and that even within the humanities she does not concern herself with subject areas in which major improvements have been made in recent years, such as instruction in modern languages. Amusing and stimulating as her work is to read, Paglia's approach may ultimately prove more harmful than beneficial, mainly because she does not have the temperament to make fine distinctions or to carefully amass the detailed evidence that gives works of scholarship their lasting value. Some such work is still being done, even in the humanities, and ultimately it may help us to understand

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

what has happened and is happening in our art and writing even better than do Paglia's familiar but crude categorizations.

Paglia's broad categories, which draw so heavily on Nietzsche and Freud, are in the end no more applicable to experience in the distant past than are Foucault's, and it is uncertain whether they have more than ephemeral value when applied to the present. Statements like Paglia's "man is contoured for invasion, while woman remains the *hidden*, a cave of archaic darkness" are just as restrictive in their way as Halperin's pronouncements about the all-defining phallus. Even Halperin would allow that man's *perception* can be penetrated. Does it really help our understanding to imagine that women (especially if born under the sign of Aquarius) have a greater connection than men to a Dionysian "chthonian swamp," and that this keeps women from becoming great chess players? Why doesn't Paglia take into consideration the great power of socialization, or the influence such images have when projected by advertising and psychological theory? Much as I applaud Paglia for her courage and her common sense, for seeing through Foucault *and* Joseph Campbell, I can't help noticing that she too is a product of the American academic world: quick to schematize, eager to promote herself, ready to jump on a theoretical bandwagon. Maybe it's time for her to look in a mirror, and use her considerable talent to examine herself.

Mary R. Lefkowitz, Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Wellesley College, is co-editor of Women's Life in Greece and Rome *(Johns Hopkins University Press).*

Death of a family

JOSEPH ADELSON

***Donald Katz*: Home Fires.** *HarperCollins. 624 pp. $25.00.*

THE AUTHOR of this book, Donald Katz, met one of its subjects, Ricky Gordon, while jogging. A friendship developed between them, in the course of which Gordon, a young composer, talked at length about his family. His father, Sam, had served in the Second World War. Sam had met his wife, Eve, while in the service, and had married her before going overseas. Eve was good-looking, had a lovely singing voice, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

had already begun a career as a popular singer, working in the Catskill hotels. They were Jewish, though somewhat uneasily so. Their first child, Susan, was born in 1943—father and daughter met for the first time when she was two. Upon leaving the service, Sam gave up any thought of higher education in order to begin earning money to raise a family. He went to work as an electrician, formed a small company with a friend, then ended the partnership because the friend had limited ambitions and refused to take chances to build the company. Sam worked hard, took risks, and the business grew. Eve stayed home, and gave birth to Lorraine, Sheila, and Ricky.

What drew Katz's attention were the remarkable outcomes that followed so conventional a beginning. All four youngsters became caught up in the counter-culture, and between them managed to assume nearly all of the identities that emerged in the period—to quote Katz: "rocker, beat, ivy-leaguer, radical, hippie, feminist, dealer, unwed mother, divorcée, gay, yogi, healer." To put it another way, "Daughters named Susan, Lorraine, and Sheila presented Sam and Eve with grandchildren named Shuna, Shiva, and Gopal." Susan enjoyed a spectacular early success as a feminist journalist, writing articles for *Ms.*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Ramparts*. At least one of these articles, on the politics of the orgasm, became celebrated. She married another gifted writer, Michael Lydon. They travelled abroad, enjoyed a few years as the "Golden Couple," and then somehow all fell apart. Susan tumbled into the depths of heroin and cocaine addiction, even spending some time as the girlfriend and partner of a drug dealer. Lorraine moved from the rock scene and left politics (and drugs) to end up as the disciple of an Indian guru. Ricky struggled with homosexuality through most of his life, ultimately accepting it (with some regret, one senses). Sheila led the most ordinary life of the four, though she too had her moments.

SO THERE WERE many marriages and lovers, and even more psychotherapies, both standard and exotic. The Gordon children played a role in or were touched by some of the most dramatic events and social movements of the postwar period—anti-Vietnam activism, the New Left, civil-rights demonstrations, the rise of the drug culture, religious cultism, and sexual promiscuity. All that and more, and all in one family. Katz saw an opportunity to portray through biographical narrative the social and moral changes of the period. He was able to get the Gordons to agree to the project and to extended interviews—with mother and father, the four children, their spouses and partners, their

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

children, other relatives, friends, and colleagues. All spoke on the record, without pseudonyms. (In a way, the result is an upper-middle-brow, radical-chic version of *The Sally Jesse Raphael Show*.) It is a prodigious amount of information to collect and distill and present, and Katz does so through a year-by-year chronology, 1945-1990, of the Gordons' lives. He is an able writer, does not waste words, and clearly leaves out a great deal. Even so there are 600 pages in the book, and there could easily be 6,000 without redundancy. These are energetic people he is reporting on, who lead complex and at times chaotic lives. Throughout I was troubled by the sheer weight of detail—I could not keep many things straight, e.g., which of Lorraine's husbands-lovers did what when?—and at the same time was uneasy about the omissions and the reasons for them.

The book is pleasant enough to read, yet after a while I found my attention flagging. I suspect this is because I did not find the Gordons interesting people. Perhaps they are—they certainly do sad and strange and perplexing things, yet so much space is given over to sheer narrative that we get little feeling for what drives them or for their inner worlds. Why does Susan, the family star, plummet from the heights? Why does she behave so recklessly? Why does she put her child so at risk, shuffling her from one caretaker to another? Why does Lorraine take up with a roguish swami who exploits her callously? She too puts her children at risk, though in a different way, moving from place to place and partner to partner. Why do such gifted women produce so little? Why are such smart people so devoid of common sense? Above all, why are they so self-destructive?

These and other questions are not avoided, far from it. We are buried in explanations. The Gordons are great explainers, as are their friends and family, and their many, many psychotherapists. What is not explained by them is explained by the pundits of psychology and social science, whose views are communicated by the author. The trouble is that there are too many explanations, which are too shallow, or too self-serving, or inconsistent, or, above all, modish and *au courant*. Towards the end of the book, immersed in an account of the latest fashion in explaining the dysfunctional family, the thought struck me that the newest theme in family pathology had not yet been mentioned—child sexual abuse. Sure enough, a few pages later, we read of Susan's memory of having been molested by an alcoholic grandfather. Is that a true memory, or is it imagined, or something in between? Did all the talk and writing about incest liberate an otherwise forgotten memory, or did they encourage its invention?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

SOMEONE ONCE SAID that to write history you must first have a theory of history, an *aperçu* that also holds for psychology and the social sciences. Katz has read widely in all these fields—widely, but not well. Familiar names are mentioned and their key ideas summarized briefly. It is a sound-bite approach that does not deepen our understanding nor, for that matter, the author's. He does not grasp that concise discussions of Erikson and Laing and Bradshaw and several dozen others do not a theory make, only a mishmash of concepts, many of them contradictory. Despite the abundance of information from and about the Gordons, I have no strong sense of either the nature or the origins of the family's "dysfunction." One is struck immediately by their narcissism. Beneath that, there probably lies a "depressive" constellation, expressing itself in derivatives: in panic about success, which may have induced Susan's fall; in addictions, which would have warded off an overtly depressive crisis; in Lorraine's life-long masochism, as in her submission to the swami and her abusive partners; in Sheila's underachievement; and in Ricky's longstanding pattern of underachievement and self-doubt. Assuming all this to be (roughly) correct, I have no idea how it was produced by the Gordon parents. Or to put it another way, I can come up with a dozen different explanations, all equally plausible. Since so much is made of Sam's workaholism, perhaps we are being told that his neglect of the family may have had a significant influence on the children's development. Maybe, maybe not. Perhaps it was Eve's ambivalence about staying home, or her fear of her husband's occasional outbursts of temper. All these possibilities, and dozens more, are dangled before the reader, who is free to choose.

My own nominee as the prime source of the Gordon problems is Eve. Her character does not come through clearly, almost always a sign that the reporter cannot quite see what is before him. We catch glimpses of contradictions and ambivalences, but they remain undeveloped. Eve shows the usual distress when learning of Ricky's homosexuality, yet encourages him to "go cruising" to find a lover. There is an even more startling moment when she reflects on her satisfaction that she was able to teach all her children to become good shoppers. The one thing that troubles her about shopping, she muses, is that you run into so many JAPs ("Jewish American Princesses") and there is nothing worse than a JAP. With all her troubles (*tsuris*), she tells her friends, at least none of her children has become a JAP. That is a remarkable statement, that it is better to raise an addict than a JAP, and that to teach a child to shop well is a key

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

accomplishment of motherhood. This shines a glimmer of light on why this Jewish family is in so many ways so non-Jewish and perhaps anti-Jewish, and why it may have been so drawn to non-Jewish expressions of messianism.

AN EVEN MORE serious problem is that Katz shares so many of the Gordon's social and cultural assumptions. No doubt he disapproves of the excesses he finds, but he does not have enough distance to recognize that these assumptions may have helped produce those excesses. Not that he has written an overtly political tract. He is fairly scrupulous about maintaining the pose of journalistic disinterest, and only occasionally does that mask slip, as when he sneers at David Horowitz's defection from the left. Yet many of the authors he cites, and praises for their insight, tilt markedly towards a leftist, counter-cultural world view—Todd Gitlin, Tom Hayden, Kenneth Keniston, and the like. Taken as a group, these writers spent the epoch celebrating themselves and their peers as the last and only hope of mankind, the most brilliant, sensitive, idealistic generation in history.

Does Katz believe that about the Gordon's (and his own) generation? Not entirely, I would guess, but enough to block out all other intellectual possibilities. The Gordons are a good example of the dissident class of "intellectuals" Schumpeter believed would arise to undo a triumphant capitalism. They are in any case representative of one side of the cultural conflict being fought out in this century. Studying this family provides an opportunity to study how and why the immune system of the dominant culture broke down in the 1960s. But there is no sign that Katz recognizes this opportunity, or knows of the writings that would allow him to see the Gordons and their world freshly. It has been long evident that the dormant equality fungus was beginning the unchecked growth we now see in the universities and elsewhere. That goes unmentioned, as does our obsessive interest in rights, as does the general complaisance about bureaucratic authority, as does the nearly universal secularism we see in the adversarial elites. Any reader of this journal could tell Katz the writers and articles and books he might have read to break out of the cocoon of likemindedness he shares with the Gordons, and which makes this book so much less than it might otherwise be.

Joseph Adelson is professor of psychology at the University of Michigan.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Rainbow warrior

ERIC REIS

***Edward O. Wilson*: The Diversity of Life.** *The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. 424 pp. $29.95.*

ON AUGUST 27, 1883, a volcanic explosion smashed the Indonesian island of Krakatau with the force of a 100-150 megaton fusion bomb. The sound from this blast, the largest in recorded history, could be heard 4600 kilometers away. The explosion formed an undersea crater seven kilometers wide and 270 meters deep, swallowing most of the island. The rest of Krakatau was incinerated by a layer of pumice ash forty meters thick at several hundred degrees centigrade, hot enough perhaps to melt lead. The island was completely sterilized.

Within two years, writes Harvard biologist E. O. Wilson in *The Diversity of Life*, fifteen species of grasses and shrubs had sprung, phoenix-like, from this ash. Within four decades the island was covered with grassland; a decade after that the grassland was displaced by forest. Today the island "is covered completely by tropical Asian rain forest," featuring (in part) a variety of worms, ants, moths, roaches, termites, snails, scorpions, spiders, centipedes, lice, lizards, beetles, butterflies, birds, bats, rats, and, lest we forget, "a rich medley of bacteria."

You have to say one thing for Professor Wilson: He sticks to his guns. Most observers would see Krakatau as stunning evidence of nature's remarkable resilience, and a minor but embarrassing blow to environmentalist assumptions. Not Wilson; he just drily notes that "ordinary volcanic eruptions are not enough ... to break the crucible of life," and proceeds to make his ecological case.

This case has three parts. First, Wilson argues that the world's biodiversity—its number and variety of distinct species—is rapidly dwindling, and that man is responsible for this mass extinction. Second, he claims that these species have enormous economic, scientific, and medical value, so that their loss is a devastating blow to humanity's material well-being. Finally, Wilson presents a more diffuse, philosophical argument, concerned with

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

humanity's psychic and moral health. All of this is designed to achieve a grand synthesis between "forces for the preservation of nature and those for economic development," as the book's publicity blurb explains. Justifying that synthesis provides much of the book's reason for being, and is the source of its acclaim.

AS A PREMIER BIOLOGIST, Wilson should be on his firmest ground while making the quantitative, scientific point that biodiversity is declining. Yet his evidence here is surprisingly shaky. Wilson himself, with admirable honesty, lays out the problem:

> Biologists find it difficult to come up with even an approximate estimate of the hemorrhaging because we know so little about diversity in the first place.... We do not know the vast majority of species and organisms well; we have yet to anoint as many as 90 percent of them with scientific names. So biologists agree that it is not possible to give the exact number of species going extinct; we usually turn palms up and say the number is very large.

Wilson offers a solution to this problem. We can generalize, he argues, from the fact that "in the small minority of groups of plants and animals that are well known, extinction is proceeding at a rapid rate, far above prehuman levels."

There are two problems with this approach. First, "the small minority" of species that we are familiar with may not be representative of the whole. On the contrary; since we have had more contact with these species, it is likely that they have been the hardest hit by human activity.

The second flaw in Wilson's approach is more serious. Wilson uses a "prehuman" baseline for biodiversity comparisons. In effect, he is comparing current levels of biodiversity with what they might be *if humans did not exist at all*. As he explains:

> Some 73 percent of the large mammal genera that lived in the late Pleistocene are extinct.... A comparable number of genera of the largest birds are also extinct. The collapse of diversity occurred about the same time that the first Paleo-Indian hunters entered the New World, 12,000 to 11,000 years ago.... If this were a trial, the Paleo-Indians could be convicted on circumstantial evidence alone, since the coincidence in time is so exact.

This passage is surprisingly radical. Surely Wilson cannot seriously be suggesting that humans return to a *pre-paleolithic* existence; indeed, the arguments he makes later on about "sustainable development" and the industrial benefits of biodiversity suggest otherwise. But if not, then why does he use these particular

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

numbers to tell us what humans have done wrong? A far more appropriate baseline for ecological comparisons would be the eighteenth century, just prior to the Industrial Revolution and the modern population explosion. This would more accurately gauge the impact of modern human development and growth, rather than mere human existence, on biodiversity. By eschewing this more reasonable standard, Wilson effectively inflates his numbers. And by placing these earliest of Americans on "trial," Wilson reveals a wariness of even relatively minimal human interaction with nature, a theme to which he returns several times. All of which raises a key question: If the Paleo-Indians cannot satisfy him, how can we hope to do so?

To be fair, Wilson does also offer data whose baseline falls after the Industrial Revolution. And while Wilson has an unfortunate tendency to lump extinctions and endangerments together (as in, "About 20 percent of the world's freshwater fish species are either extinct or in a state of dangerous decline"), one does get a general, qualitative sense that extinctions are indeed on the rise. It's just that the data aren't nearly as compelling as Wilson would have one believe.

In addition to these empirical data, Wilson offers a more theoretical proof of the decline in global biodiversity. Since the *area* of wild habitats (and in particular, the South American rain forest) is decreasing, he reasons, the *number* of species must also be decreasing, by a mathematically predictable amount. Wilson bases this conclusion on the classic theory of island biogeography he conceived with ecologist Robert MacArthur in 1963. This model of extinction and renewal noted that the number of different species in a habitat (e.g., an island) was directly related to the area of that habitat. Wilson explains:

> [E]xtinction rates will rise more slowly on the larger islands. The reason is that more area means more space, more space means larger populations for each species, and finally larger populations mean an expectation of longer life for the species.... So ... larger islands have more species at equilibrium than smaller islands do.

Wilson is a world-class expert on the subject of island biogeography. Nevertheless one must question his judgment in attempting to apply this concept to *global* biodiversity. The theory's logic is flawless on a local level; but it takes insufficient account of the concept of scale. Common sense suggests that the so-called "area effect" may drop off after a certain point, that the marginal gain to a species of having an ever-larger space to breathe may eventually decline. Put another way: A species whose

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

habitat shrinks from one square mile to half a square mile may be gravely threatened; a species whose habitat shrinks from 1000 square miles to 500 square miles is more likely to survive. In both cases, the habitat decline is 50 percent, but the impact of this nominally equivalent decline on the two species is different. As Wilson himself observes in a different context, "Nature is always too devious to obey simple formulations in any but a slovenly manner." One must adjust one's models and calculations for a myriad of factors, including scale.

Nevertheless, Wilson applies the formula for island biogeography to a global scale without significant modification. (To the extent that he does adjust this equation, it is primarily to compensate for differences among habitats, rather than differences of scale.) By this method he calculates that global biodiversity will decline somewhere between 10 and 25 percent over the next thirty years.

THIS LEADS DIRECTLY to Wilson's second major theme: that the extinction of these species represents a serious material loss to mankind. Wilson cites the example of *Zea diploperennis*, a wild relative of corn that is "resistant to diseases and unique among living forms of maize in possessing perennial growth. Its genes, if transferred into domestic corn ... could boost domestic production around the world by billions of dollars." In this instance, Wilson warns, mankind was very lucky: "Occupying no more than 10 hectares (25 acres) of mountain land, [the corn] was only a week away from extinction by machete and fire" when this remarkable species was finally discovered.

In medicine, such "star species" include the rosy periwinkle of Madagascar, whose extracts can perhaps cure Hodgkin's disease and acute lymphocytic leukemia; meadowsweet, from which aspirin was derived; and the penicillin fungi. In the United States, Wilson says, "a quarter of all prescriptions dispensed by pharmacies are substances extracted from plants. Another 13 percent come from microorganisms and 3 percent more from animals, for a total of over 40 percent that are organism-derived." In short, without the benefits of biodiversity, mankind would be far hungrier and more sickly.

Wilson's statements are valid, but he fails to put them in context. Biotechnology may indeed revolutionize agriculture, and this can only be applauded—but the stakes here are greatly exaggerated. Agricultural underproduction and inefficiency are simply not pressing problems of our time, nor will they be for the forseeable future. This is an age of huge crop surpluses,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

when Western governments pay their farmers not to grow more food. In the Third World, where malnutrition and even outright famine are more common, new crops might be more helpful. But even there, the case for techno-agriculture is far from compelling. Third-World famine often results from poor transportation and distribution (not to mention political strife and war) rather than underproduction.

Wilson's case for the medical exploitation of biodiversity is far stronger. Nature has indeed been extremely helpful in advancing modern medicine. Here too, however, Wilson ignores important factors. First of all, most drugs have common substitutes (admittedly as a result, in part, of biodiversity). Penicillin, as the granddaddy of antibiotics, is often dispensed by default; but today, there is a wide range of similar antibiotics available of equal or even greater potency. Aspirin now shares shelf space with ibuprofen (Advil) and acetaminophen (Tylenol). This does not mean that a decline in biodiversity would not be harmful to medicine; it is important for a doctor to have several treatment options available. But it does suggest that there is no single cure for cancer that may have just been irrevocably destroyed by a South American bulldozer. This undercuts the apocalyptic nature of Wilson's warnings that we are destroying our medical future.

Furthermore, Wilson ignores the costs to medicine of restricting industrial development. The development of a modern industrial society, and the vast improvement in living conditions that resulted, has done more for public health in the past century than any thousand medicines combined. It is hard to imagine how any aid program or "bio-profits" could replace the benefits of Western-style industrialization for the Third World. And even in the industrialized bloc, development continues to indirectly benefit medicine: Richer societies are better able to support such luxuries as medical research, and are better able to bear the burden of the ever-rising costs of health care. Finally, Wilson's vision fails the test of realism. We cannot just sit here, hunting and gathering, waiting for miracle medicines to appear.

Nevertheless, Wilson does have a point. Much of the environmental destruction in South America does not directly further industrial development in the area. (Though by advancing the local standard of living, even "senseless" destruction for short-term benefit may help lay the groundwork for such development.) So let us accept, for the moment, the idea that there are medical treasures in the rain forest that we should protect, even if we must forgo short-term economic benefit to do so. How should we go about conserving this resource?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Wilson gives some attention to the idea that the free market can solve this problem. "The race is on," he observes, "to develop methods, to draw more income from the wildlands without killing them, and so to give the invisible hand of free-market economics a green thumb." It is realism, he says, that makes him take market forces seriously:

> One Peruvian farmer clearing rain forest to feed his family, progressing from patch to patch as the soil is drained of nutrients, will cut more kinds of trees than are native to all of Europe. If there is no other way for him to make a living, the trees will fall. Proponents of the New Environmentalism act on this reality.

But Wilson ultimately retreats from this flirtation with market economics, for several reasons. First, the market has already had a shot at preserving biodiversity. Wilson notes that in the 1960s and 1970s, several companies tried to profit from biodiversity by scouring patches of rainforest for marketable products. These efforts were not found to be cost-effective and were abandoned. (Wilson argues that this failure was due to the limitations of 1970s technology.) Second, while the market may eventually act on biodiversity's behalf, it will surely not do so at a rate fast enough for Wilson. But perhaps the most important reason of all is this: Wilson values each and every species *for its own sake*, whether or not it has medical or economic value; his nod in the direction of the market is opportunistic, incidental to his primary agenda. This is not to imply that this agenda is somehow disreputable or unworthy of consideration, or that market values are the only legitimate justification for public policy—but it is important to understand exactly where Wilson is coming from.

AND HERE WE link up with Wilson's final argument for preserving biodiversity: morality. Wilson's preference for a naturalistic philosophy is clear:

> The riches are there, fallow in the wildlands and waiting to be employed by our hands, our wit, our spirit. It would be folly to let any species die by the sole use of the criterion of economic return, however potent, simply because the name of that species happens to be written in red ink.

Wilson explains that nature is key to man's psychological well-being. "Wilderness settles peace on the soul.... Signals abound that the loss of life's diversity endangers not just the body but the spirit." Thus "[w]e should not knowingly allow *any* species or race to go extinct" [emphasis added]. Man and nature are morally and ethically intertwined; thus we have a moral obligation to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

preserve nature—*all of it*.

This is not an argument: It is a world view. Fully engaging the fundamental philosophical and ideological principles of that world view would require a treatise, not a book review. Suffice it to say here that, contrary to the book's billing, *The Diversity of Life* does not reconcile environmentalism with the market. Ultimately, then, *The Diversity of Life* is unsatisfying. Wilson's market arguments are largely abandoned in favor of a moral thesis that is intriguing but mostly unoriginal. Anyone truly interested in exploring that world view would be better served by reading *Walden*.

Eric Reis is an assistant editor of The Public Interest.

Of the pundits, by the pundits, for the pundits?

SUZANNE GARMENT

***Alan Hirsh*: Talking Heads: Political Talk Shows and Their Star Pundits.** *St. Martin's Press. 240 pp. $17.95.*

***Eric Alterman*: Sound and Fury: The Washington Punditocracy and the Collapse of American Politics.** *HarperCollins. 352 pp. $23.00.*

NO DEVOTEE of the astrological sciences is more dependent on the rhythms of the cosmos than are today's political journalists, pollsters, analysts, and other members of our pundit class. These people are not paid to take the long view of history. They must vent their opinions at great speed and are thought wise if their analysis seems to explain what transpires a week—maybe a month, maximum—after they deliver their dicta.

So a pundit must strive to be just a few nanoseconds ahead of the crowd. If he or she is too farsighted, the audience will have forgotten his predictions by the time they come to pass. If he jumps aboard history's train too late, he will sound trite. Worst of all, events may prove him totally wrong, and he will look ridiculous.

In *Talking Heads: Political Talk Shows and Their Star Pundits*, Alan Hirsh portrays part of America's new pundit class, the celebrity

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TV commentators, and describes what he sees as the decline in our politics due to their prominence. More recently, Eric Alterman has published *Sound and Fury: The Washington Punditocracy and the Collapse of American Politics*. Alterman's effort treads some of the same ground as Hirsh's account. But *Sound and Fury* is broader than the earlier book, covering both TV and influential print media such as the *New Republic*, the *Washington Post*'s "Outlook" section, and (yes) *The Public Interest*.

Alterman's indictment is also more specifically ideological. When he writes in his book's title about the "collapse of American politics," he means—and makes no bones about it—that conservative ideas and policies win far too often.

Both Hirsh's and Alterman's books have some interesting things to say about the modern pundit business. But they may be a little late. They shine their investigative light on the pundit class at a moment akin to the long-ago morning when the Brontosaurus woke up, took a contented look at the world he ruled, and got hit from behind by a large meteor.

HIRSH'S BOOK STARTS by tracing the history of the modern political TV shows in which journalists do most of the talking. On one side, these shows are descended from a high-minded tradition of network political commentary reaching back to the early 1950s, when CBS producer Fred Friendly brought Edward R. Murrow and Walter Lippmann to the television screen. But today's shows are also heirs to another tradition born in the 1950s: talk radio, which featured aggressive hosts battling and sometimes browbeating their guests and callers.

One of the first offspring of this union was William F. Buckley's show *Firing Line*, begun in 1966. In 1969 came Martin Agronsky's *Agronsky and Company*, the first press show to feature journalists talking to each other rather than interviewing politicians and public officials. In 1982, *The McLaughlin Group* first showed its choleric face. Since then we have seen the appearance of many similar programs, such as *This Week with David Brinkley*, *Crossfire*, *The Capital Gang*, *Nightline*, and *The MacNeil/Lehrer News Hour*. In various proportions, these shows combine discussions among journalists with interviews of outsiders. The tone of the programs ranges from sedate to maniacal.

All of them, says Hirsh, are seriously inadequate as models of public discourse about politics. First, they do not give much time to any one subject. In addition, for the sake of amusement, this format prods panelists to be more assertive and simpleminded than they would be if they were expressing their views in print.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Indeed, some journalists even construct beastly TV personae quite different from their real-life selves. Viewers of *The McLaughlin Group* in the 1980s, for instance, had no way of knowing that raging bull Robert Novak is a very nice man once the cameras are turned off.

Hirsh argues that the shows also degrade public discourse by making print columnists into television celebrities. Once this fate befalls a journalist, the demands of fame diminish the quality of his written work, and because of his celebrity status he is taken less seriously.

Finally, Hirsh says the TV shows distort politics by presenting a very narrow range of opinions. He says one reason is corporate ownership of the media, though he sees the same restricted compass in government-funded television. Another reason for the narrowness is the insular elitism of the journalists on these shows. And Hirsh gives a third reason by quoting Noam Chomsky:

> The technical structure of the media virtually compels adherence to conventional thoughts; nothing else can be expressed between two commercials, or in seven hundred words, without the appearance of absurdity that is difficult to avoid when one is challenging familiar doctrine with no opportunity to develop facts or argument.

Here Chomsky allows that the problem of television lies largely in the medium, rather than in deliberate ideological manipulations of it.

HIRSH STRAIGHTFORWARDLY CALLS our attention to the dilemma that television's inherent nature poses for public discussion. By contrast, Alterman thinks the problem's causes and effects transcend television. He begins with a list of particulars—its items are familiar by now—to illustrate the awful state of our present-day political life: our moribund economy, poisonous environment, festering cities, special interests, negative ads, and Willie-Horton-and-the-Flag-Factory symbolism. Part of the problem, the book argues, is that pundits have been allowed to set the terms of American political debate and have done the job badly.

Who are these modern pundits? Certainly not deserving heirs of the revered columnist Walter Lippmann, Alterman argues. He notes that in the 1960s, the pundit class ceased belonging to a bipartisan political establishment. Many of the most important commentators (Alterman cites Anthony Lewis, Mary McGrory, and the newly famous I.F. Stone) became government's out-and-out adversaries, telling readers and viewers that public officials were not to be trusted.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Nixon administration, especially Vice President Spiro Agnew, began attacking the liberal pundits as out-of-touch elitists. Alterman says that news organizations like the *New York Times* were cowed by this criticism and decided they had to have some conservative opinion writers to balance their liberal ones. But the respectable members of the trade had gone over to the anti-Vietnam, anti-Nixon side. So, who were editors and producers forced to hire? Ideologues, that's who. People like William Safire and George Will. Individuals who *did not even have backgrounds in journalism*!

Thus began the descent into darkest conservatism. On John McLaughlin's TV show, the loudest conservative voice became that of the bellicose Pat Buchanan. Meanwhile, to represent the left, McLaughlin's producers could come up with nothing more than the "mildly liberal politics" of the likes of Eleanor Clift. The *Washington Post* op-ed page, in spite of its highly varied mix of opinions during these years, was dominated by the right, partly because its liberal writers were "confused or uninspired."

Alterman says that at the *New Republic*, a magazine full of talented liberals, the right was nevertheless allowed to set the magazine's tone, as Charles Krauthammer did by pulling out "all the clichés" in support of Ronald Reagan's Central America policy. True, Alterman notes with some embarrassment, the magazine's liberals failed to register their outrage by leaving the magazine. But their sticking around was, as *New Republic* writer Michael Kinsley put it, merely a "Faustian bargain."

According to Alterman, this correlation of political forces has had ruinous policy results. For instance, the punditocracy, blinkered by its Cold War mentality, dismissed Gorbachev and his reforms. As a result, the U.S. was soon "rapidly losing influence in Europe" while others made economic deals with the new regime.

In the same way, the argument goes, the pundits kept us from having a real debate over America's economic decline. Yes, Paul Kennedy's declinist book, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, got much discussion by the pundits. (The question of why, says Alterman, is "not fully answerable.") But the debate was a "major disappointment."

Finally, Alterman claims America went to war in the Gulf because the conservative pundits, far more warlike than the people as a whole, whipped up a war fever that substituted Saddam Hussein for Stalin in the necessary role of transcendent villain.

If the punditocracy is as conservative as Alterman depicts it, a reader would expect to have found it stoutly supporting George

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bush over the Democrats in 1992. But—another one of those anomalous happenings—the "fickle" pundit class, as Alterman puts it, jumped off the Republican train. Lest we think that the pundits were displaying liberal inclinations, Alterman explains that the Democrat to whom they threw their support, Bill Clinton, was really a Republican in disguise.

In Alterman's view, the punditocracy chose Clinton as its instrument because he consistently advocated neoconservative positions. In fact, Alterman's argument continues, this anointing of Clinton by such an elite priestly class made the Arkansas governor vulnerable to populists like Ross Perot and threatened (this was before the November elections) to cost Clinton the presidency.

AND WHAT is to be done about the pundits' stranglehold on American politics? Alterman claims no solution but offers "one modest proposal": Journalists should abandon the "cult of objectivity," which dictates that reporters should give their readers verifiable facts instead of personal opinions. It is the "vacuum" created by this "objective" reporting, he says, that has given the pundits their opening and their overweening influence.

Alterman quotes sociologist Michael Schudson to the effect that journalistic objectivity is a sham anyway, defined largely by market forces rather than by a true professional consensus about what is solid information and what is not. Moreover, objectivity makes for bad journalistic writing. So Alterman proposes that we let every journalist be his or her own columnist: We will thus drown the pundits' views in a sea of other personal perspectives.

This notion is currently a favorite among academics, mainly on the left, who are trying to remedy what they see as the press's excessive vulnerability to manipulation by political forces on the non-left. Their prescription is just a shade short of a crackpot idea. The assumption that most reporters, freed from their shackles, would start producing fresh, insightful, well-written personal journalism is bizarre. Moreover, the willingness to toss away much of what trust now remains between citizens and the national press shows real recklessness towards the political system that these critics claim to be perfecting.

Besides, the cure addresses a disease that may not even exist.

Today's pundit industry is, just as Alterman and Hirsh vividly describe it, a pain in the neck. Over the past twenty-five years, the decline of the political parties and of traditional institutions, exacerbated by the spirit and consequences of political reform, has left a barren landscape against which other political players

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and forces stand taller than before. The press has assumed more political power and has often exercised it in unthinking packs. And the merger of television's power with increased press influence has given us modern punditry.

While we still have some first-rate commentators, there is little doubt that constant TV-tailored opinion-making, and its corrosive effect on the print media, have rendered this country's national political commentary worse than it otherwise would be.

BUT TO MAKE this complaint is not the same as claiming that the pundits' choke-hold over political debate is a means by which conservatives dominate a liberal public.

That choke-hold, for one thing, looks fairly feeble after this year's presidential election. During the race, America's establishment columnists and talking heads were reduced to the status of vestigial organs largely irrelevant to the outcome.

In addition, the campaign has taught us that when widely shared ideas and impulses are excluded from public debate these days, someone will figure out a way to expand that debate and make political profit from his ingenuity. In other words, we have seen Ross Perot, and in him we have glimpsed part of our political future. The techniques Perot pioneered—from blanketing the talk shows to pitching electronic town halls—will, for better or worse, affect the shape of politics from now on.

As for the picture of the "punditocracy" pushing conservative views on a leftish country, it is more likely that the reverse is true: In recent years, certainly, the state of American punditry has followed currents of power in the larger worlds of politics and political ideas.

Several decades ago, graduate students in political science were engaged in the controversy between the pluralists, who argued that many people play parts in governing this country, and the elitists, who claimed that only a few people governed. Robert Paul Wolff cut through the debate nicely by noting that the country is ruled, just as the elitists said, by the few—but that the few govern, by and large, in a manner consistent with values held by the many.

The same is true of modern punditry. Contrary to the impression Alterman gives, conservative commentators have not overwhelmed their liberal counterparts by the strength of superior numbers. Instead, the conservatives have dominated the discussion because the most prominent of them—William Safire, George Will, Charles Krauthammer, Evans and Novak—exercise influence far beyond their numbers. This influence, in turn, has

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reflected both the general reaction against liberalism that began to influence our politics in the late 1970s and, later on, the Republicans' control of the White House in the 1980s.

Now, though, we have elected a Democratic president—not liberal enough for Alterman, but markedly more liberal than George Bush. Liberals will assume power throughout Washington. This change in our politics may not be as big as the one that brought the Reaganites into office in 1980, but you can bet that the current shift will be reflected in the character of our political commentary.

This newer, more progressive punditry may still not be to Alterman's liking. But if it is not, the reason will lie less in the views of an insular, self-perpetuating punditocracy than it will in the attitudes of a much larger body of citizens.

Suzanne Garment, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, is the author of Scandal: The Culture of Mistrust in American Politics *(Random House).*

New York story

ROGER STARR

***Joel Schwartz*: The New York Approach: Robert Moses, Urban Liberals, and the Development of the Inner City.** *Ohio State University Press. 390 pp. $35.00.*

NEW YORKERS GREETED the end of the Second World War with two housing demands. The first was for more housing: The previous fourteen years had left a painful shortage, made more acute by the formation of new families by young people who had lived at home before the war. The second demand was for an end to slums.

By slums, New Yorkers meant acres and acres of tenement houses built in the nineteenth century. Many were six stories high, none with elevators. Almost universally they lacked central heating and hot water. Most also lacked toilets; the overwhelming majority were out in the hall. Rooms were smaller than the minimum dimensions established by legal standards early in the twentieth century. Window ventilation was grossly inadequate. Some rooms lacked windows altogether; others had windows that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

opened on a two-foot-wide airshaft into which tenants dropped their garbage bags from the upper floors, in preference to making a trip to the ground floor or leaving the garbage in their apartments overnight. There were no bathrooms in these buildings; residents bathed using the kitchen sink after heating water on the stove. Neither fireproof nor fire-resistant, the buildings were a deadly hazard. Approximately one million New Yorkers were living in such buildings when the war ended in 1945.

As Joel Schwartz argues in his most interesting recent book, *The New York Approach: Robert Moses, Urban Liberals, and the Development of the Inner City*, those calling for slum clearance were willing to countenance the displacement of the poor from their obsolescent homes in deteriorating parts of the city. The city's coordinator of construction, Robert Moses, also favored relocation, and received important support from many housing reformers despite the fact that his goals—the development of the City Beautiful and Efficient—were not the same as theirs. Schwartz insists that the wishes of poor people were entirely neglected, a view that assumes that people living in pre-1901 tenements, whose minimal floor area per apartment blocked modernization, were satisfied with their homes or would have been satisfied with whatever minor improvements could have been achieved with them in occupancy. The other victims of urban renewal, he tells his readers, were those who worked in manufacturing enterprises. New York's factories were decimated because they were out of harmony with Moses' idea of the City Beautiful. It is now obvious that even without Robert Moses' help, other American cities lost much of their manufacturing. Causes included high taxes, high power costs, inefficient multistory factory spaces, traffic and transportation problems, and lower wages in other parts of the U.S. and abroad.

MOSES BEGAN his demolish-and-replace housing policies during the Second World War, when he conceived a plan for two family developments (ultimately known as Stuyvesant Town and Peter Cooper Village) that would house 8,000 people in the old Gas House district north of 14th Street near the East River. Moses' plan reflected an understanding of the policies of the large financial institutions that would invest in the projects. At the same time, he understood how the terms and conditions had to be acceptable to the local government on whose lands these institutions proposed to invest. Moses pressured the Albany statehouse to pass the enabling legislation, known in its final form as the Redevelopment Companies Law. Moses had managed to recon-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cile what housing investors wanted with what the city government claimed for itself.

Stuyvesant Town, by far the larger of the two elements in the Gas House redevelopment plan, was able to keep its rental rates within reach of lower-middle-class tenants for several reasons. First, there was a new right of eminent domain conveyed by the state. Condemnation proceedings and compulsory sale kept the old owners, or some of them, from holding out and thus imposing an unnaturally high price for their property. Also, rents could be increased only with the consent of the city. And Stuyvesant Town received the major benefit of being taxed no more than the tenements that had previously occupied the site.

The developer, builder, and long-term owner of this huge development was the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, whose motives were primarily financial, tinged with a wish to demonstrate to current and potential policyholders that the company was motivated to help solve urban problems. In an apparent move to give prospective white tenants what he would have wanted for himself, Metropolitan's president, Frederick Ecker, announced that black tenants would not be allowed to live in Stuyvesant Town. The civil-rights revolution was still more than ten years away, but many vocal white New Yorkers felt disgraced by this shockingly blunt assertion of a racist policy (though many of the protestors may well have lived in buildings in which owners followed identical policies).

For Moses, uninterested in whether black tenants were admitted to Stuyvesant Town, the emphasis on race was simply another hindrance. He insisted that clearing slums and building new, decent, well-planned housing for low-income families was his only goal. If the housing were not built, then no one at all, black or white, would be living in it. Moses persuaded Ecker that Metropolitan should build a separate, large project for middle-class blacks. Critics were not mollified. (It should not be forgotten, however, that the Federal Housing Administration's mortgage insurance regulations at that time pinpointed racial mingling as a negative factor in its appraisals.)

AS SCHWARTZ SHOWS, slum clearance and reconstruction was a complex affair. Private corporations had to be found who were willing to put their money into areas where few others dared invest. And adapting projects to the needs of individual investors became even more difficult when the federal government bought its way in. Schwartz's step-by-step examination of Moses' methods is the most interesting account that we have had

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the massive coordination between three levels of government power and a private developer.

Acting on behalf of the city, Moses had to offer sites to developers in which he thought they might be interested. He had to be sure that the sites they liked qualified for federal land-acquisition financing. Simultaneously, he had to deal with developers' requests that sites be enlarged to keep them safe from unwelcome nearby land use. He had to be sure that site plans were approved by the local borough president, lest the Board of Estimate, on which the president sat and voted, turn the proposal down. Among the different parties whose interests he had to coordinate in the final plan were the city planning commission and the city comptroller. This meant negotiating taxability and the ownership of the project's interior streets.

Ultimately, a long list of sites was developed with federal and sometimes state aid. The housing that was eventually produced ran from low-rent, publicly owned units to unabashed luxury housing in previously underdeveloped or undertaxed areas. Moses was instrumental in developing Lincoln Center. He made land available for institutional expansion, helping universities and hospitals.

As Moses understood, changing the city's land uses required breaking a lot of eggs. But many changes for which Moses has been blamed—including his alleged destruction of the city's industrial base and the construction of the Cross-Bronx Expressway—had little, if anything, to do with his work in urban renewal. Garment manufacturing was carried out primarily in Manhattan's multi-story manufacturing buildings between 42nd and 23rd Streets and Sixth and Eighth Avenues. These areas were unaffected by Moses' urban renewal. In fact, New York's zoning law still characterizes the district as "manufacturing," even though much of the former activity has moved, first to the South and later overseas. Meanwhile, the Cross-Bronx Expressway is an essential traffic artery for trucks. Without it, New Yorkers might have found trucks butting their way through Bronx streets never designed for them, something that would have congested delivery lines, killing off commercial activity.

THOUGH HE SEEMS TO RECOGNIZE and respect Moses' organizing ability and will, Schwartz is opposed to urban renewal. He considers it unfair to the poorest of the poor, whom he seems to feel should get priority attention. He implies that no one should ever be relocated from an Old Law tenement as the result of a public program. But is it not sometimes necessary

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to relocate poor people so that bridges and tunnels can be built? Before 1910, 10,000 people were forced out of their homes to make room for Pennsylvania Station. Should the railway station not have been built?

The fact is that the majority of urban-renewal relocations were from Old Law tenements that would have faced a slow death had they not been demolished. And while it is true that the housing developments made possible by urban renewal were usually rented or sold to people of higher income than those who were displaced, the city was simultaneously constructing the nation's largest program of public housing. More than 650,000 people, not counting doubled-up poor families, are now living in these structures. The tragedy of New York's housing is not that Old Law tenements were, as Schwartz puts it, "ruthlessly" destroyed, but that the satisfactory New Law tenements built after 1901 and the "multiple dwellings" built after 1929 were destroyed in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s by rent control and by insufficient supplements to tenant income.

There is, it seems to me, only one consistent principled position to take in opposition to government-assisted urban renewal: that the free market should be relied on to end the deficiencies of bad housing. But the housing market is notably unfree. Legislated construction and occupancy standards, zoning, government licensing of plumbers and electricians, the Davis-Bacon law (which regulates wages on federal construction jobs), safety regulations, codes imposed by insurance companies, and mortgagee's rules—all these and more stand in the way of a free housing market. And the imposition of these standards brings higher taxes as well.

Incidentally, Mr. Schwartz, for one, would not accept the libertarian position. He puts in mocking quotation marks the phrase, "the highest and best use." This key concept in land economics indicates the value of a parcel of land when it is put to the most important economic activity that its location makes possible.

UNLESS SCHWARTZ CAN FIND a way to snatch vacant land out from under its occupants without disturbing them—a trick some magicians perform with a table cloth and porcelain, glass, and cutlery—he will have to accept relocation as part of the housing-improvement process. His proposed solution—erecting new housing on vacant land so that no one will be forced to relocate—is probably not of much help to low-income families.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

In a conversation with me a few years before his death, Moses said that there was only one way to save the city:

> Look at a square mile of Brooklyn slums. Count the people. Build as many units of new housing on vacant land out in Rockaway as those people in the first section of Brooklyn need. Then move everyone out of the first section of the Brooklyn slum and put them permanently in Rockaway. Demolish the first section of the Brooklyn slum. Then move all the people living in the second section of the Brooklyn slum into the first section that has been rebuilt. Then demolish the empty second section and build it up and then move the people from the third section into the second section you've built, and so on until you get it done.

I suggested that people would not consent to being moved around like suitcases in a railroad package room. Moses raised his voice and told me that all his life people had been telling him that what he wanted to do couldn't be done, and he had done it anyway. I did not bother to tell Moses how strongly Rockaway's oceanside residents would oppose the arrival of low-income people. The presence of such newcomers would exert a downward pressure on the value of their homes, which were probably their greatest asset. Many public-housing tenants would be equally opposed to relocation. They want to be in an area where they can use the stores and where transit is available to take them to work or to visit the government agencies on which many of them depend. They also want to keep the companionship, religious services, health care, and entertainment provided by the city and its institutions.

A long time ago, Ira Robbins, a member of the New York City Housing Authority, told me of a comment made by an elderly tenant in a new project that the authority had proudly built on vacant land overlooking Long Island Sound. He had asked her how she liked her new home. The building was fine, she replied, but there was nothing around it, no stores, nothing. "I look out the window and what do I see? Water and boats and more water. What's to like?"

Roger Starr, former commissioner of New York City's Housing and Development Administration, is editor of the City Journal.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Founders' vision

THOMAS L. PANGLE

***Martin Diamond*: As Far as Republican Principles Will Admit.** William A. Schambra, ed. *The AEI Press. 405 pp. $34.95.*

WHEN MARTIN DIAMOND died prematurely of a sudden heart attack in 1977, he had chosen the title for, but had not otherwise begun to organize and edit, a collection of his previously published essays. William Schambra has now selected and arranged such a collection, guided by Diamond's title. Schambra elucidates the meaning of that title in a most helpful and thought-provoking synoptic introduction. We are all in Schambra's debt for a volume that will remind those of us who learned from Diamond just how much we learned about American politics, while affording a new generation an opportunity to share in the riches.

The reader naturally approaches this collection wondering how well the essays stand the test of time. They were written, after all, in what now appears another era: The Cold War was at its height, society was in the grip of the ferment of the "sixties," and social science was dominated by dogmatic positivism. Yet while Diamond took shrewd note of and judiciously criticized the world and the authorities immediately surrounding him, his focus was on more abiding issues and authorities, to which he attempted to lead his students and contemporaries. His writings are as a consequence free of the inadvertently self-parodying servitude to fashion that characterizes the work of most "intellectuals." On the other hand, while Diamond studied constantly and drew heavily upon traditional political philosophy, he disdained the pretentious title "political philosopher," and was too modest to make the perennial questions of political philosophy the principal focus of his writings.

In what is probably the most revealing and profound of his essays, "Teaching about Politics as a Vocation," Diamond defines his conception of his own public calling. He seeks to articulate a golden "mean" over and against positivistic political science on the one extreme and the "Left critics" of the "behavioral establishment" on the other. For Diamond, the Left critics are the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

less respectable of these extremes, despite their commendable challenge to the "cake of custom"; despite their justified criticisms of the unacknowledged, undefended, and hence irrational value presuppositions of the positivists; and despite their rightful insistence "that the study of political questions is inseparable from questions regarding justice, the good life, and the best political order."

In words that remain (alas!) as accurate as when they were written, Diamond observes that none of the Left critics "has really taken seriously the rich and ennobling perplexities of justice and the good life," that "in all the most prominent instances" they have "dogmatically embraced one fundamental version of justice and the good life—namely, democracy understood only as equality, democracy made more and more democratic." While claiming to reopen the "value question ... they in effect close it once and for all."

Diamond had greater respect for the positivists, in part because of their "scrupulousness" in trying to avoid indoctrination. The pursuit of objective scientific truth led some positivist scholars to be "foremost in defending the decorum and integrity of the academy and the scholarly professions." But Diamond respected positivism above all as an opponent, and as the source of the basic but unrecognized theoretical presuppositions of even the Left critics. He saw that the Left in our time tends to remain the slave—the now rebellious slave—of the basic positivistic assumption of a radical distinction between fact and value, between the realm of scientific objectivity and the realm of power struggles between competing perspectives.

THE CRUX of Diamond's argument is therefore directed against Max Weber, the acknowledged Coryphaeus of positivistic social science. Diamond takes aim specifically at Weber's famous essays, "Politics as a Vocation" and "Science as a Vocation." Weber's "total dissevering of the political and the scientific," conveyed even by the titles of these two essays, "is, of course, an expression of the like dissevering by Weber of value and fact." This dissevering renders Weber (and both positivism and Left-criticism) blind to the true vocation of the *teacher* of political science. For "teaching about politics" constitutes the unity-in-difference of science and politics. To comprehend this dialectical unity we must abandon as false the basic dichotomy shared by Weber and the Left.

Weber and his allies believe that science should aim at objectivity, and in particular at the objective description of behavior.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Politics, by contrast, is simply the "striving to share power or to influence the distribution of power." Diamond argues that we must "proceed from a different understanding of what the political is." We must "understand politics as comprehending, at least equally with power, the purposes of power." And "this means purposes not as mere givens," that is, as "preferences determined by irrational underlying forces, but purposes understood as authentic ideas—as a people's arguments and reasonings, their opinions—the ideas of justice and human excellence they proclaim and live by or betray."

DIAMOND'S ESSAYS, consequently, are devoted to a principled, rational justification of American democracy, as conceived by the wisest of the Founders and above all by Madison. At the very outset, Diamond was forced to confront the widespread scholarly prejudice, instilled by the great "progressive" historians and their students, that the Founders, and Madison especially, were anti-democratic aristocrats or plutocrats. The truth, Diamond insisted, had been obscured and distorted by historians seeking to marshall arguments for progressivism and the New Deal. In fact, as Diamond demonstrated in a cogent series of essays (including the famous "Liberty, Democracy, and the Founders," first published in *The Public Interest*), the Founders, in sharp contrast to the progressives and almost all our contemporary democratic theorists, were deeply *self-critical* partisans of democracy. As such, the Founders led by Madison provide models of what it means to deploy a truly "critical democratic theory."

The Founders understood their task to be the educative chastisement of popular arrogance, and the erection of a system of representative, federal institutions that would temper and correct the threats mass democracy can pose to minorities, to uncommon individuals, and to private enterprise. The Founders, as Diamond interprets them, taught that democracy's two great moral principles—equality and liberty—should be conceived and maintained in complementary tension, with a clear priority given to liberty, understood above all in terms of individual rights, including property rights, equally protected for all. This means (as Diamond conceded in "Ethics and Politics: The American Way," the essay that the editor has singled out as "a fitting summary of Diamond's understanding of the American regime") that the United States was intended from the beginning "to whet democratically the appetites of all, to emancipate acquisitiveness and its attendant qualities." As Diamond puts it in other essays, "this

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is the most troubling thing about the American political system." It is "possible to question," he admits, whether Madison "did not take too narrow a view of what the dangers were."

The most profound such questioning is to be found in Tocqueville, whose formulation Diamond adopts and quotes: "[I]n the midst of this universal tumult, this incessant conflict of jarring interests, this continual striving of men after fortune, where is that calm to be found which is necessary for the deeper combinations of the intellect?" But tumult, Diamond contends, is "the price to be paid," not only to bring economic opportunity—and thereby the necessary basis of civic dignity—to all, but also to establish a system that will provide the best chance, at least within the modern American context, for the emergence of a "natural aristocracy" (as opposed to conventional, hereditary, or plutocratic pseudo-aristocracies) whose formation Jefferson repeatedly extolled as a high purpose of the new American democracy. In Diamond's graceful words, "life—mockingly, eternally—teaches that the complete human life is achieved only by some and by a hard, tortuous ascent. Properly understood, democracy promises only that there will be no artificial barriers to everyone's opportunity."

HAVING RESCUED the authentic democratic theory of the Founders from the misrepresentations of historians, Diamond proceeded to defend it on two fronts: against mainstream liberal political scientists such as Robert Dahl, Charles Lindblom, and James MacGregor Burns; and against the more radical utopians of the New Left, anticipated by progressives such as Richard Hofstadter. The latter, in Diamond's view, naively rejected Madison's common-sense awareness of the weaknesses and inequalities that all history teaches us are embedded in human nature, basing that rejection on an empirically unjustified assumption of the possible historical transformation and elevation of human nature. As for the political scientists, it was their tendency in the 1950s and 1960s to call for a replacement of the Madisonian system by something much closer to the British parliamentary model. In the American context, this would supposedly enable "true national majorities" to bestow upon dynamic leaders the capacity to engineer sweeping socioeconomic reforms. But, Diamond wondered, does not the success of the British system owe much to the lingering aristocratic heritage of an elite, educated, ruling class, and to mass deference (albeit increasingly uneasy)? Might not parliamentary government in the diverse, populist American context resemble more the French

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Third and Fourth Republics, with alternating Napoleonism and multi-party deadlock? Above all, supposing the scheme worked as intended, would it not lead in the direction of the enervating, bureaucratic, and plebiscitarian paternalism—the "soft despotism"—that Tocqueville desperately warned Americans was their all-too-likely fate?

TOCQUEVILLE WAS INDEED as much Diamond's teacher as were the authors of *The Federalist*, and it was partly for this reason that Diamond devoted so many of his essays to the theme of federalism. In Diamond's eyes, the greatest value of federalism is not states' rights or even the highly constructive federal features of the system of checks and balances within the national government (e.g., the Senate, the electoral college). The "genius of this system" is that it can foster at least a pale echo of the small-scale civic participation and public-spiritedness celebrated by the Greeks. Yet, as Diamond shows in "The Federalist's View of Federalism," this genius was not adequately appreciated by the authors of *The Federalist*. "The source of profound instruction on decentralization is Tocqueville," whose thought guides Diamond's essay on "The Ends of Federalism."

It is Tocqueville again who, going beyond Hamilton and Madison, best formulates and explains the leading moral principle of American democracy: "self-interest rightly understood." It is Tocqueville who reveals not only the principle's prosaic solidity but also its "harsh foundation," as well as its severe moral limitations.

In other words, the perspective from which Diamond defends the Founders' achievement, especially in "Ethics and Politics: The American Way," is a more capacious perspective than that of the Founders themselves. The predominant philosophic basis of the American Founders, Diamond stresses, was the modern theory of natural rights, based on the notion of human nature as conceived in an abstract, apolitical State of Nature and issuing in the doctrines of the Social Compact and Popular Sovereignty. This modern theory replaced the older Aristotelian conception according to which the ends of government must be seen in light of an articulation of human happiness constituted by excellences that center on but transcend the virtues of citizenship and statesmanship. The moderns "narrow the idea of ethics" by focusing on basic, universal goals like life, security, and prosperity, and by conceiving of virtues in terms of the qualities needed to achieve such goals. The moderns charged the ancients with having neglected the material well-being of the vast majority in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

order to concentrate on the spiritual welfare of the very few. Diamond finds some justification in the modern critique, but he regards the moderns as having purchased their undeniable new benefits at a very high cost, not only in philosophic understanding of the human spirit, but in the practical understanding of the nature and needs of republican government.

THE RIGHTS or liberties that the Founders take to be their ends are prepolitical and individual, or private, rights, culminating in the "pursuit of happiness." According to the Declaration of Independence, all government, including democratic self-government, is conceived as a means for the securing of such individual liberties, possessed equally by all men whatever their qualities of heart and mind. Yet republican government continues to depend on statesmen with a proud sense of superior worth rooted in a consciousness of the intrinsic nobility of a life of dedication guided by rare practical wisdom. What is more, as Diamond reminds us in his lapidary essay, "Lincoln's Greatness," the example of Lincoln and his continuing importance in the life of the republic demonstrates how crucial popular "deference" to and "veneration" of such leaders remains, for the sake of the spiritual as well as the narrowly political health of the community. The Founding generation, leaders and masses, themselves exhibited such qualities. But the Founders created a system "that makes no provision for men of the founding kind." They devoted their efforts to devising, in the words of Publius quoted by Diamond, a "policy of supplying, by opposite and rival interests, the defect of better motives"; and insofar as they turned their attention to the cultivation of leadership, they tended to substitute the virtues of professionalism and professional reputation for the genuine moral virtues.

Diamond suggests that the Founders assumed or hoped that sufficient public spirit in the citizenry, and virtue and wisdom in the leadership, would emerge spontaneously—just as they seem to have presumed that "the full range of higher human virtues" (the Jeffersonian "natural aristocracy") would have "suitable opportunity to flourish, so to speak, privately...." The Founders "were apparently confident that privately and without political tutelage in the ancient mode, these higher virtues would develop from religion, education, family upbringing, and the natural yearnings of human nature...." And it is "a grave matter of inquiry," Diamond observes, "[w]hether these expectations were reasonable then or remain so now."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE ESSAYS on education, inspired by Tocqueville, take the crucial first steps in such an inquiry. The Founders, in Diamond's judgment, failed to take the measure of the complex tension between dedication to equality and dedication to public education that is essential for the fostering of human dignity and excellence, especially in a mass society: "As Tocqueville long ago said, the dominating idea of our age, and of our political order in particular, is equality. Equality is therefore at once for us the source of our political benefits and also the source of our defects and dangers." But "liberal education," as Jefferson repeatedly stressed, "cannot avoid an aristocratic implication." A focus on public education requires that we take into account an awesome threat Tocqueville discerned in our midst—the "empire of mediocrity." Viewed in the context of the problem of education, civic and intellectual, the virtue of the Madisonian system is that it allows us to build enclaves of excellence. The system does not itself build, or adequately guide the building of, such enclaves, but it affords us the material wherewithal and the political protection to do so, and it allows and to some extent encourages us to look for guidance in richer and deeper premodern sources.

One may fault Diamond for having given insufficient attention to the thematic educational reflections discoverable in a few of the Founders, notably Franklin and Jefferson; but I must say I am convinced, after careful study of these sources, of the essential soundness, not of every detail, but of the major contours of Diamond's presentation. According to Diamond, a full appreciation of the Founders' great project requires transcendence of that project in the direction of classical political philosophy, by whose light alone will be seen the true grandeur of promise as well as the danger in the American experiment. The promise is simply and elegantly captured in Diamond's words on the meaning of Lincoln for our democracy:

> Let me paraphrase Lincoln to make my point. He was *of* us, and he was *for* us, but he was not *by* us. He gave infinite dignity to our principles of popular government, and he cared for us. But he was not *by* us. We did not make him what he was. His greatness of soul and mind belong not to us, but to man as man. He transcended the conditions of any society as such. But what we can everlastingly claim is that we did accept this prince of men, we gave ourselves to him, we let him lead us, and we have the sense to love him.

Thomas L. Pangle is professor of political science at the University of Toronto.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Head count

JOSHUA ABRAMOWITZ

***Thomas E. Mann and Gary R. Orren, eds.*: Media Polls in American Politics.** *Brookings Institution. 172 pp. $28.95 cloth, $10.95 paper.*

***David W. Moore*: The Superpollsters: How they Measure and Manipulate Public Opinion in America.** *Four Walls, Eight Windows. 388 pp. $21.95 cloth.*

DESPITE then-Governor Clinton's solid lead in the weeks leading up to the 1992 election, it seemed unwise to have too much confidence in the polls. There was the matter of H. Ross Perot's rising, falling, and again-rising fortunes: One never knew from which of his adversaries he would draw more support. Meanwhile, Clinton's lead, though substantial, was shaky: Voters were often more anxious to cast an anti-Bush vote than to endorse the Democratic challenger. Pundits' predictions spread out across the spectrum. Some said that the polls were underestimating a Clinton landslide. Still others awaited a "Major miracle," whereby the polls underestimate the strength of a conservative candidate, à la Britain's election of Prime Minister John Major last year.

There would have been something pleasant about a surprise result, be it in one direction or another. An alliance of high-tech computers, telephone banks, and Ph.D.s poring over the 200 polls taken between the conventions and the election would have failed, and we would have all learned how the sentiments of a vast nation can be neither pinned down nor reduced to a set of facts and figures. Alas, it did not happen. The polls were right. Public opinion was both read and interpreted with a high degree of precision.

The significance of polls in the 1992 election, however, is not just that they successfully predicted the outcome. It is also that the polls themselves were the focus of so much of the nation's attention. From anchormen to armchair pundits, discussion of the race often focused on, well, the race. News stories frequently relied on, or were at least put in the context of, "the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

latest polls and what they mean." And individual voters had to determine if they would vote for their true favorite or, after reviewing the latest poll numbers, cast a strategic bid for their second choice. This is not to say that the election was so entirely poll-driven as to be without substance. It does mean that in some crucial way following presidential politics resembled following horses at the track.

In Thomas E. Mann and Gary R. Orren's *Media Polls in American Politics*, a number of prominent pollsters and academics have written essays on some of the issues surrounding the polls conducted by major media organizations. David W. Moore's *The Superpollsters: How They Measure and Manipulate Public Opinion in America* takes a broader, more historical, and more anecdotal look not just at media polls, but also at those conducted by campaigns and major polling organizations. They are uncontroversial books—explaining, rather than arguing—but each offers valuable information on how and under what circumstances polls do and do not work, as well as a more limited look at their effect on the American social and political scene.

WHEN DOUGLAS WILDER ran against Marshall Coleman in the 1989 Virginia gubernatorial race, polls put Wilder ahead, on the average, by 7 points. Yet he won by less than a point and a half. For David Dinkins in the 1989 New York mayoral election, a 14-point lead in the polls gave way to an ultimate victory of just 2 points. And although George Deukmejian won the 1982 California gubernatorial contest, each and every one of the nineteen polls that were conducted put Tom Bradley ahead. In all the above elections, the polls misgauged support for a black candidate, predicting that he would attract a substantially greater number of votes than turned out to be the case. Now, as the essay by Henry E. Brady and Gary R. Orren in *Media Polls in American Politics* points out, the evidence here does not make for conclusive proof of racism. Normal campaign instability, unusual turnout patterns, and undecided voters making last-minute shifts all might sway an election. And the increased media focus on a mixed-race contest could also affect voters. But it could also be true that voters are lying to pollsters (or hiding out in the "undecided" column) to hide their support for the white candidate. There are two possible motivations for this: Voters might be nonracist but concerned about being perceived otherwise, or they might want to hide genuine racism.

As a social phenomenon, this latter possibility is highly disturbing if true. But the specific technical difficulty here—deter-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mining if people are lying—is far from the only source of polling inaccuracy. Brady and Orren discuss in some detail the various "sampling" errors, which result from the failure to reach representative members of the group being polled. In attempting to steer around such problems, the pollster must account, for example, for the 5 percent of people who do not have telephones, for the fact that certain types of people are more likely to answer the phone in a household, and for the often substantial percentage that refuse to participate (although pollsters employ "refusal converters" to attempt to sway those reluctant to take part).

Meanwhile there are a variety of problems with the questions themselves: question wording (during the Cold War, for example, polls showed that a majority of Americans simultaneously favored "détente" and "getting tough" with the Soviet Union); question placement (support for a president can be lowered if an approval-rating question is preceded by questions that put the president in a negative light); and familiarity with the subject (Michael Dukakis' favorable poll ratings early in the 1988 campaign were based on a vague, and hence easily changed, impression of the candidate).

Moore's book, which focuses much more on the pollsters themselves, discusses how these problems can be magnified when there is a conscious bias on the part of the pollster. As with so many other types of science, the empirical "science" of polling is easily twisted to serve partisan ends. Moore lays out in some detail how pollster Louis Harris distorted the results of his surveys in the 1976 Democratic primary so as to greatly exaggerate the strength of his candidate, Edward Kennedy. To cite one of many examples, at that year's Democratic convention Harris reported on a poll that showed that most delegates preferred to be released from their state primary pledges (thereby benefiting Kennedy, who had not fared well enough in these primaries to unseat Carter) by a count of 65 to 31 percent. Harris had asked Democratic voters if they were in favor of either "forcing each delegate to vote for the candidate they were named to vote for," or "allowing each delegate the right to vote for any candidate whom they *now* think would be the best nominee of the Democratic party." But he neglected to report that when the issue was phrased differently—"President Carter won the primaries and caucuses fair and square and he should be nominated at the Democratic convention, because he has a majority of the delegates"—delegates agreed by 62 to 36 percent.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOTH BOOKS thus make it clear that polls can easily be a source of obfuscation, if not outright manipulation. Indeed, the combined risks of all possible inaccuracies are enough to make one feel that Twain's overused quip on the veracity of statistics is in fact not used nearly enough. But these books, written largely by pollsters, do not advocate a return to a poll-less political stone age. And with good reason. Mann and Orren cite pollster Frederick Mosteller, who points out: "It is easy to lie with statistics. But it is easier to lie without them." The bulk of both these books is devoted to demonstrating how polls can cut through misunderstanding, dishonesty, and confusion with often breathtakingly clean strokes.

The Superpollsters opens with a discussion of *The Hite Report* and its two sequels. Shere Hite, the author of this controversial trilogy, shocked much of the country in the 1970s and 1980s with her findings that Americans held rather non-traditional—to say the least—attitudes on sexuality and relationships. She wrote, for example, that most women were emotionally unsatisfied with their relationships, and that substantial majorities of men and women had had extramarital sex.

ABC's polling director was suspicious, Moore explains, and had his network conduct a national poll. Their findings were quite different. In response to the first point, 93 percent of women said that they did in fact find their relationships emotionally satisfying; meanwhile only 6 percent of women and 13 percent of men said that they had ever had extramarital sex. Even if these latter figures are doubled—to account for lying on such a sensitive issue—the percentage is inconsistent with Hite's findings. Why the disparity? Hite had narrowly distributed her research questionnaires—those for women were distributed primarily through women's groups—and even among this narrow group she had a very low rate of return.

Although these books were published too early to discuss the recently concluded election, one can still apply some of what is written to the events of 1992. Republicans, anxious for Bush to narrow the gap with Governor Clinton, looked hopefully to the 1976 Ford-Carter race, in which Ford closed a 33-point gap to the point where he was actually ahead—albeit by a statistically insignificant amount—only to drop back and lose by 3 points. But Ford was able to come back with such strength because most Americans approved of his performance as president: Despite his initially weak numbers, voters were content with Ford; they had merely preferred Carter. This year, with polls showing that two-thirds of voters were not content with the President's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

performance, the story was quite different. (Interestingly, the fact that Bush did partially come back, and then fade at the last minute, may mean that the 1976 and 1992 races did share one dynamic: The closing of the gap may have been due to the electorate rethinking the possibility of a new president and then, when it seemed likely that the old president could actually win, rethinking that prospect as well.)

MANN AND ORREN, in *Media Polls in American Politics*, make only the most cautious recommendations for changes in polling. They write that they favor, for example, the media making a greater effort to downplay and contextualize poll results, and resisting the temptation to overly dramatize. Who could disagree? Perhaps their suggestion that the media focus on "fewer polls of higher quality" is wishful; still, it is hardly unreasonable.

Moore takes an even easier path—he makes no serious suggestions at all. His final words return to a point made by George Gallup five decades ago, when the polling pioneer argued that learning about public opinion would allow the country to take "the pulse of democracy." Public opinion, Gallup argued, should become the "real ruler of America." It was a longing, fifty years premature, for an "electronic town hall." But Moore allows Gallup's words to pass virtually unchallenged.

In his essay at the end of *Media Polls in American Politics*, E.J. Dionne notes: "[Perot's] experience dramatizes the extent to which polls must be seen not as mere instruments, but as institutions that can powerfully affect the entire democratic system." Unfortunately, Dionne does not do much to follow up on this important comment. Is there not a dark side to being so thoroughly tuned in to the pulse of public opinion? Moore or Dionne might have juxtaposed Gallup's rosy prediction with more somber words on tyranny of the majority from *The Federalist*. Or, to stick with a contemporary, they might have considered what Peggy Noonan recently noted in *Forbes* magazine, in an essay attempting to explain the sense of American national malaise:

> People who take their pulse too often are likely to make it race; people obsessed with breathing are likely to stop. Nations that use polls as daily temperature readings inevitably give inauthentic readings, and wind up not reassured but demoralized.

The surfeit of self-knowledge available through modern polling is capable of engendering both majoritarianism and malaise. And when we know that a candidate's every word is prepared,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

measured, and analyzed with a complex batch of data from polls and focus groups, even an exercise as splendid as the free selection of a political leader can come to be viewed cynically. Now, it may be that these problems are more than outweighed by the many benefits of modern polling. But as concerns, they are worth taking very seriously—more seriously, certainly, than they are in these two books.

Joshua Abramowitz is an assistant editor of The Public Interest.

The end of sociology?

IRVING LOUIS HOROWITZ

***Stephen Pfohl*: Death at the Parasite Cafe: Social Science (Fictions) and the Postmodern.** *St. Martin's Press. 320 pp. $14.95.*

IT HAS BECOME the custom in recent years for books to carry a general subject designation on their back covers—presumably to help the retailer know where to shelve the work. *Death at the Parasite Cafe* is listed by its publisher as "Sociology/ Postmodern Theory/Fiction." The jacket-copy of the book explains: "This is a disturbing theoretical fiction of contemporary shifts from modern to ultramodern rituals of patriarchal, racist, and economic power." I often find myself at odds with such blurbs, but in this instance one could hardly do better. *Caveat emptor*!

Stephen Pfohl, the author of this work, is professor of sociology at Boston College, author of several previous works of social theory and history, and president of the Society for the Study of Social Problems. He clearly knows something about social movements and public relations, as well; his acknowledgements page lists 139 names of friends, colleagues, and teachers. In a field as balkanized as sociology, this is quite an impressive troop count.

The subtext of *Death* (what we used to call simply its strategy) is an effort to mobilize workers against the Parasite Cafe, a place "where a transnational host of corporate information operators feed upon the digitally coded flesh of others." This is a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

bizarre work of overwhelming spleen, McLuhan's *Gutenburg Galaxy* gone off the deep end. Pick any single page for a selection of fragmentary ramblings: "white and black implode or are informationally realigned"; "Voodoo is partially simulated in the ultramodern Capitalist mediascape"; "panicked bodies within contemporary CAPITAL"; and my favorite: "wave-like networks of information that pass through ultramodern CYBORG BODIES."

All of this appears on page 259. Just about every page has something similar. Indeed, only the author could explain the distinction between one chapter and the next. Unfortunately, he fails to do so in any of the book's five prefaces. We are faced with an incantation rather than a narrative, a litany of moralities and immoralities, with the author's stream of consciousness placed in the service of raw sentiment. To his credit, he carries off such rubbish with aplomb. He catalogues capitalism's wrongs in an inimitable literary style. Pfohl's idiosyncrasy is the ultimate appeal of *Death at the Parasite Cafe*. Its pages are dominated by the author, the author's friends, and others who share his sentiments on everything from violence to sexuality. Even the photo collages spaced randomly throughout the book are by "S. Pfohl." The search for authenticity is reduced to narcissism.

This is unabashedly a book of its generation. It is written without concern for formal rules of grammar. It overflows with ambiguities and multiple meanings. Its aim is to identify a generation in rage—a sort of Dadaism for our age. The earlier radical appeal to history has been replaced by a hatred of history and its alleged heterosexual, racist, and other biases. Of course, were the author to make an appeal to real history, he might have to cope with such disquieting facts as the fall of communism and the continuing vitality of democracy. Better to invent history.

But Pfohl's book is not what Fukuyama intended by invoking "the end of history," nor does it correspond to what Daniel Bell, several decades earlier, called "the end of ideology." Earlier generations of historians and sociologists operated within a framework of rationality. In contrast, Pfohl and his associates, by crossing Marx, Durkheim, Derrida, Foucault, Lacan, and dozens of lesser figures, aim to create a "performatory collage of social and psychoanalytic criticism, deconstructive ethnography, and social science fiction." Their goal is to break down rationality and embarrass their elders into a sense of shame—shame about scientific objectivity, high technology, social policy, national purpose. As the author likes to say: Get funky. We are doing the wrong dance. The proper dance for our time is to the siren song of the Mad Hatter, the insane asylum, the Marquis de Sade.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CLEARLY THOSE fearful for the future of sociology should be. But if this book is any indication, the end will come not from a frontal assault on the discipline's intellectual gurus, but instead from Professor Pfohl and his movement within a movement. Their assault on rationality cannot be brokered. Theirs is not a movement to sit still for compromise. And a movement it is: *Death* is but one of several "culture texts" edited by Arthur and Marilouise Kroker. These texts bear such exquisite titles as *Body Invaders: Panic Sex in America* and *The Hysterical Male: New Feminist Theory* (by the series editors themselves).

Here we have yet another tragic illustration of the demise of a discipline. The flight from sociology as rational discourse on social order and social change can only be hastened by the exaggerated mannerisms represented in this book. Real social science and research are still being performed in a wide variety of areas—from criminology to urban affairs, from demography to decisionmaking. But here, too, are the Mad Hatters, performing their tricks in the halls of what was once a distinguished discipline, one that offers dwindling hope for understanding our times.

Listen to the author. On page 39 he raises a perfectly reasonable challenge: "How might a critical sociology, and other modern social science discourses, best respond to the troubling challenges of ultra-modern social forms?" Alas, it is precisely the absence of any set of coherent answers to this question that dooms this work, at best, to the status of a "cult classic."

I COMPLETED Professor Pfohl's book with a sense of sadness rather than anger. How did it happen that a person of such obvious intelligence and talent could become so enraged by the world about him? To speak of simple "anti-Americanism" would be a mistake. It would trivialize his ideology. The operative term here is deconstruction—meaning destruction, the clearing away of our ultra-postmodern world to make way for something better.

Bohemianism has always carried within it the seeds of extreme individualism (especially in America) no less than extreme collectivism (especially in Russia). *Death* is the embodiment of the bohemian tradition. It is the *cri de coeur* of one lost in the complexities of a "new world order." It should be read, or at least experienced, by all who are complacent that our country is calm and well. When totalitarianism next shows up on our shores, it may come wrapped not in an American flag, but as this: a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

critique of the present in the name of the future.

As a book, this is a catastrophe. As a manifesto, it must be taken seriously. For while Pfohl's text may cause little stir in societal or literary circles, the growing influence of this author and his cult may be the strongest indication yet that all is not well in the tattered mansions of the sociology profession.

Irving Louis Horowitz is Hannah Arendt Distinguished Professor of Sociology and Political Science at Rutgers University. He is the author most recently of The Decomposition of Sociology, *forthcoming from Oxford University Press.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION

(Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

1A. Title of publication: *The Public Interest.* 1B. Publication no.: 00333557. 2. Date of filing: September 23, 1992. Frequency of issue: Quarterly. 3A. No. of issues published annually: Four. 3B. Annual subscription price: $21.00. 4. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: 1112 16th Street, NW, Suite 530, Washington, DC 20036. 5. Complete mailing address of the headquarters of general business offices of the publisher: *The Public Interest,* 1112 16th Street, NW, Suite 530, Washington, DC 20036. 6. Full names and complete mailing addresses of Publisher, Editors, and Managing Editor: Publisher, National Affairs, Inc., *The Public Interest,* 1112 16th Street, NW, Suite 530, Washington, DC 20036. Editors, Irving Kristol and Nathan Glazer, *The Public Interest,* 1112 16th Street, NW, Suite 530, Washington, DC 20036. Managing Editor, Ira Carnahan, *The Public Interest,* 1112 16th Street, NW, Suite 530, Washington, DC 20036. 7. Owner: National Affairs, Inc. (nonprofit), 1112 16th Street, NW, Suite 530, Washington, DC 20036. 8. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total bonds, mortgages or other securities: None. 9. The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes has not changed during the preceding twelve months.

10. Extent and nature of circulation:	*Average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months*	*Actual no. copies of single issue published nearest to filing date*
A. Total no. copies:	8,750	9,200
B. Paid circulation:		
1. Sales through dealers and carriers:	1,269	1,024
2. Mail subscriptions:	5,624	5,555
C. Total paid circulation:	6,893	6,579
D. Free distribution:	433	424
E. Total distribution:	7,326	7,003
F. Copies not distributed:		
1. Office use, leftovers, etc.:	588	1,131
2. Returns from news agents:	836	1,066
G. Total:	8,750	9,200

11. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete: Ira Carnahan, Managing Editor.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED